

Æ S O P;

A

C O M E D Y.

As it is PERFORMING at the

T H E A T R E S

O P

L O N D O N and D U B L I N.

WRITTEN BY SIR JOHN VANBRUGH.

D U B L I N:

Printed for THOMAS RICHEY, at *Euclid's-Head*,
in *Dame-street*, opposite *Crow-street*,

M D C C L X I I I.



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

ÆSOP,	Mr. MOSSOP.
LEARCHS,	Mr. VERNEL.
Sir POLYDORUS HOGSTYE,	Mr. JEFFERSON.
BEAU,	Mr. O'BRIEN.
QUAINT,	Mr. RYDER.
ROGER,	Mr. WAKER.
First TRADESMAN,	Mr. SHEPHERD.
Second TRADESMAN,	Mr. RYDER.
ORONCES,	Mr. DEXTER.

W O M E N.

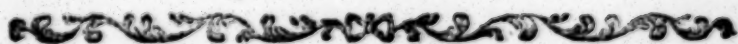
EUPHRONIA	Mrs. JEFFERSON.
DORIS,	Mrs. ABINGTON.
HORTENSIA,	Mrs. BURDEN.

S E R V A N T S, &c.

ÆSOP.



Æ S O P.



ACT I SCENE I.

Learchus's House.

Enter Learchus, Euphonia, and Doris.

Lear. **A**T length I am blest with the sight of the World's Wonder, the Delight of Mankind, the incomparable *Æ/ōp*. You had time to observe him last Night, Daughter, as he sat at Supper with me. Tell me how you like him, Child; is he not a charming Person?

Euph. Charming!

Lear. What say'st thee to him, *Doris*? Thou art a good Judge, a Wench of a nice Palate.

Dor. You wou'd not have me flatter, Sir?

Lear. No, speak thy Thoughts boldly.

Dor. Boldly, you say?

Lear. Boldly, I say.

Dor. Why then, Sir, my Opinion of the Gentleman is, that he's uglier than an old Beau.

Lear. How! Impudence.

Dor. Nay, if you are angry, Sir, second Thoughts are best; he's as proper as a Pike-man, holds up his Head like a Dancing-Master, has the Shape of a Barb, the Face of an Angel, the Voice of a Cherubim, the Smell of a Civet Cat—

Lear. In short, thou art Fool enough not to be pleas'd with him.

Dor. Excuse me for that, Sir, I have Wit enough to make my self merry with him —

Lear. If his Body's deform'd, his Soul is beautiful : Would to kind Heaven, as he is, my Daughter cou'd but find the means to please him.

Euph. To what end, dear Father ?

Lear. That he might be your Husband, dear Daughter.

Euph. My Husband ? Shield me kind Heaven—

Dor. Psha! he has a mind to make us laugh, that's all.

Lear. *Æsop* then is not worth her Care, in thy Opinion.

Dor. Why truly, Sir, I'm always for making suitable Matches, and don't much approve of breeding Monsters. I wou'd have nothing marry a Baboon, but what has been got by a Monkey.

Lear. How dar'st thou liken so incomparable a Man to so contemptible a Beast ?

Dor. Ah, the Inconstancy of this World ! Out of sight, out of mind. Your little Monkey is scarce cold in his Grave, and you have already forgot what you us'd so much to admire : Do but call him to remembrance, Sir, in his red Coat, new Gloves, little Hat, and clean Linen; then discharge your Conscience, utter the Truth from your Heart, and tell us whether he was not the prettier Gentleman of the two—By my Virginity, Sir (tho' that's but a slippery Oath, you'll say) had they made love to me together, *Æsop* should have worn the Willow.

Lear. Since nothing but an Animal will please thee, 'tis pity my Monkey had not the Virginity thou hast sworn by. But I, whom Wildom charms, even in the homeliest Dress, can never think the much-deserving *Æsop* unworthy of my Daughter.

Dor. Now, in the Name of Wonder, what is't you so admire in him ?

Lear. Hark, and thou shalt know ; but you, *Euphronia*, Be you more especially attentive.

'Tis true he's plain ; but that's, my Girl, a Trifle.

All manly Beauty's seated in the Soul ;

And that of *Æsop*, Envy's self must own

Outshines whate'er the World has yet produc'd.

Craesus, the prosperous Favourite of Heaven ;

Craesus,

Crasus, the happiest Potentate on Earth ;
 Whose Treasure (tho' immense) is the least part
 Of what he holds from Providence's Care,
 Leans on his Shoulder as his grand Support.
 Admires his Wisdom, doats upon his Truth,
 And makes him Pilot to Imperial Sway.
 But in this elevated Post of Power,
 What's his Employ ? Where does he point his Thoughts ?
 To live in Splendor, Luxury, and Ease,
 Do endless Mischiefs, by neglecting Good,
 And build his Family on others Ruins ?
 No :

He serves the Prince, and serves the People too ;
 Is useful to the Rich and helps the Poor ;
 There's nothing stands neglected, but himself.
 With constant Pain, and yet with constant Joy,
 From Place to Place throughout the Realm he goes,
 With useful Lessons, form'd to every Rank :
 The People learn Obedience from his Tongue,
 The Magistrate is guided in Command,
 The Prince is minded of a Father's Care ;
 The Subject's taught the Duty of a Child.
 And as 'tis dangerous to be bold with Truth,
 He often calls for Fable to his Aid.
 Where under abject Names of Beasts and Birds,
 Virtue shines out, and Vice is cloth'd in Shame.
 And thus by inoffensive Wisdom's Force,
 He conquers Folly wheresoe'er he moves :
 This is his Portraite.

Dor. A very good Picture of a very ill Face !

Lear. Well, Daughter ; what, not a word ? Is it possible any Thing that I am Father of can be untouch'd with so much Merit ?

Euph. My Duty may make all things possible : But *Æsop* is so ugly, Sir.

Lear. His Soul has so much Beauty in't, your Reason ought to blind your Eyes : Besides, my Interest is concern'd ; his Power alarms me. I know throughout the Kingdom he's the Scourge of evil Magistrates, turns out Governors when they turn Tyrants, breaks Officers for false Masters ; excludes Judges from giving Sentence, when they have been absent during the Tryal ; hangs

Lawyers when they take Fees on both sides ; forbids Physicians to take Money of those they don't cure. 'Tis true, my Innocence ought to banish my Fears : But my Government, Child, is too delicious a Morsel, not to set many a frail Mouth a watering : Who knows what Accusations Envy may produce ? But all wou'd be secure, if thou could'st touch the Heart of *Æsop*. Let me blow up thy Ambition, Girl ; the fire of that will make thy Eyes sparkle at him. (*She sighs.*) — What's that Sigh for now ? Ha ! A young Husband, by my Conscience : Ah, Daughter, had'st thou a young Husband, he'd make thee sigh indeed. I'll tell thee what he's compos'd of. He has a Wig full of Pulvilio, 'a Pocket full of Dice, a Heart full of Treason, a Mouth full of Lies, a Belly full of Drink, a Carcass full of Plasters, a Tail full of Pox, and a Head full of — nothing. There's his Picture ; wear it at thy Heart if thou can'st. But here comes one of greater Worth.

Enter Æsop.

Lear. Good morning to my noble Lord ; your Excellency—

Æsop. Softly, good Governor : I'm a poor Wanderer from place to place ; too weak to train the weight of Grandeur with me ? The name of Excellency's not for me.

Lear. My noble Lord ; 'tis due to your Employ ; your Predecessors all—

Æsop. My Predecessors all deserv'd it, Sir, they were great Men in Wisdom, Birth, and Service ; whilst I, a poor, unknown, decrepit Wretch, mounted aloft for Fortune's Pastime, expect each moment to conclude the Farce, by sinking to the Mud from whence I sprung.

Lear. Great *Cræsus's* Gratitude will still support you ; his Coffers all are open to your Will, your future Fortune's wholly in your power.

Æsop. But 'tis a Power that I shall ne'er employ.

Lear. Why so, my Lord ?

Æsop. I'll tell you, Sir.

*A hungry Goat, who had not eat
Some Nights and Days (for want of Meat)
Was kindly brought at last,
By Providence's Care,*

To better Cheer,
 After a more than penitential Fast.
 He found a Barn well stor'd with Grain,
 To enter in requir'd some Pain;
 But a delicious Bait
 Makes the way easy, tho' the Pass is strait.

Our Guest observing various Meats,
 He put on a good modish Face,
 He takes his Place,
 He ne'er says Grace,
 But where he likes, he there falls to and eats.

At length with jaded Teeth and Jaws,
 He made a Papse,
 And finding still some room,
 Fell to as he had done before,
 For time to come laid in his Store;
 And when his Guts cou'd hold no more,
 He thought of going home.

But here he met the Glutton's Curse;
 He found his Belly grown so great,
 'Twas vain to think of a Retreat,
 Till he had render'd all he'd eat,
 And well he far'd no worse.

To the Application, Governor.

Lear. 'Tis easy to be made, my Lord.

Æsop. I'm glad on't. Truth can never be too clear.
 [Seeing Euph.] Is this young Damsel your fair Daughter,
 Sir?

Lear. 'Tis my Daughter, my good Lord: Fair too,
 if she appears such in the Eyes of the unerring *Æsop*.

Æsop. [going up to salute her.] I never saw so beautiful
 a Creature.

Lear. *aside.* Now's the time; kiss, soft Girl, and fire
 him.

Æsop. [gazing at her.] How partial's Nature 'twixt her
 Form and mine!

Lear. *aside.* Look, look, look, how he gazes at her!
 —Cupid's hard at work, I see that already. Slap; there
 he hits him — if the Wench would do her part. But see,
 how the perverse young Baggage stands biting her
 Thumbs, and won't give him one kind Glance — Ah the
 sullen

fullen Jade ! Had it been a handsome strong Dog of five and twenty, she'd a fall'n a coquetting on't, with every Inch about her. But may be it's I that spoil Sport, I'll make a pretence to leave them together. Will your Lordship please to drink any Coffee this Morning?

Æsop. With all my heart, Governor.

Lear. Your Lordship will give me leave to go and order it myself ; for unless I am by, 'tis never perfect.

Æsop. Provided you leave me this fair Maid in Hostage for your Return, I consent.

Lear. My good Lord does my Daughter too much Honour.

Ah that the Wench wou'd but do her part (*Aside, going off.* —Hark you, Hussy— [*Turning back to Euphonia aside.*

—You can give yourself Airs sometimes, you know you can. Do you remember what work you made with yourself at Church t'other day ? Play your Tricks over again once more for my pleasure, and let me have a good account of this Statesman, or, d'ye hear ?—You shall die a Maid ; go chew upon that ; go. (*Exit Lear.*

Æsop. Here I am left, fair Damsel, too much expos'd to your Charms, not to fall your Victim.

Euph. Your Fall will then be due to your own Weakness, Sir ; for Heaven's my Witness, I neither endeavour nor wish to wound you.

Æsop. I understand you, Lady ; your Heart's already dispos'd of, 'tis seldom otherways at your Age.

Euph. My Heart dispos'd of !

Dor. Nay, never mince the matter, Madam. The Gentleman looks like a civil Gentleman, e'en confess the Truth to him : He has a good Interest with your Father, and no doubt will employ it to break the Heathenish Match he proposes to you.

To Æsop. Yes, Sir, my young Lady has been in love these two years, and that with as pretty a Fellow as ever entered a Virgin's Heart ; tall, strait, young, vigorous, good Cloathes, long Perriwig, clean Linen ; in brief, he has every thing that's necessary to set a young Lady a longing, and to stay it when he has done : But her Father, whose Ambition makes him turn Fool in his old Age, comes with a back Stroke upon us, and spoils all our Sport. Wou'd you believe it, Sir ! He has propos'd
to

to her to-day the most confounded ugly Fellow : Look, if the very Thoughts of him don't set the poor thing a crying ? And you, Sir, have so much power with the old Gentleman, that one word from you would set us all right again. If he will have her a Wife, in the name of *Venus* let him provide her a handsome Husband, and not throw her into the Paws of a thing that Nature in a merry Humour has made half Man, half Monkey.

Æsop. Pray what's this Monster's Name, Lady ?

Euph. No matter for his Name, Sir, my Father will know who you mean at first word.

Æsop. But you shou'd not always chuse by the Outside alone ; believe me, fair Damsel, a fine Perriwig keeps many a Fool's Head from the Weather : have a care of your young Gallant.

Dor. There's no Danger, I have examin'd him ; his Inside's as good as his out ; I say he has Wit, and I think I know.

Euph. Nay, she says true ; he's even a Miracle of Wit and Beauty : Did you but see him, you'd be yourself my Rival.

Æsop. Then you are resolv'd against the Monster.

Dor. Fy, Sir, fy, I wonder you'll put her in mind of that foul frightful thing : We shall have her dream of nothing all night but Bats and Owls, and Toads and Hedgehogs, and then we shall have such a squeaking and squealing with her, the whole House will be in an Uproar : Therefore, pray Sir, name him no more, but use your Interest with her Father that she may never hear of him again.

Æsop. But if I should be so generous to save you from the old Gallant, what shall I say for your young one ?

Euph. O, Sir, you may venture to enlarge upon his Perfections : you need not fear saying too much in his Praise.

Dor. And pray, Sir, be as copious upon the Defects of t'other ; you need not fear out-running the Text there neither, say the worst you can.

Euph. You may say the first is the most graceful Man that *Asia* ever brought forth.

Dor. And you may say the latter is the most deform'd Monster that Copulation ever produc'd.

Euph.

Euph. Tell him that *Oronces* (for that is his dear Name) has all the Virtues that compose a perfect Hero.

Dor. And tell him that *Pigmy* has all the Vices that go to equip an Attorney.

Euph. That to one I could be true to the last moment of my Life.

Dor. That for t'other she'd cuckold him the very day of her Marriage.

This Sir, in few words, is the Theme you are desir'd to preach upon.

Æsop. I never yet had one that furnish'd me with more matter.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My Lord, there's a Lady below desires to speak with your Honour.

Æsop. What Lady?

Ser. It's my Lady—my Lady—[*To Doris.*] The Lady there, the wise Lady, the great Scholar, that no body can understand.

Dor. O ho, is it she? Pray let's withdraw, and oblige her, Madam; she's ready to swoon at the insipid sight of one of her own Sex.

Euph. You'll excuse us, Sir, we leave you to wiser Company.

[*Exeunt Euph. and Dor.*]

Enter Hortensia.

Hort. The Deeds, who from *Atropos's* Breast preserves the Names of Heroes and their Actions, proclaims your Fame throughout this mighty Orb, and—

Æsop. (*aside.*) Shield me, my Stars! what have you sent me here? For pity's sake, good Lady, be more humane: My Capacity is too heavy to mount to your Stile: If you wou'd have me know what you mean, please to come down to my Understanding.

Hort. I've something in my Nature soars too high For vulgar Flight, I own;

But *Æsop's* Sphere must needs be within Call;

Æsop and I may sure converse together:

I know he's modest, but I likewise know.

His Intellects are categorical.

Æsop. Now, by my Faith, Lady, I don't know what *Intellect* is; and methinks *categorical* sounds as if you call'd me Names. Pray speak that you may be understood; Language was design'd for it, indeed it was.

Hort.

Hort. Of vulgar Things, in vulgar Phrase we talk ;
But when of *Æsop* we must speak,
The Theme's too lofty for an humble Stile :
Æsop is sure no common Character.

Æsop. No, truly, I am something particular. Yet, if
I am not mistaken, what I have extraordinary about me,
may be describ'd in very homely Language. Here was
a young Gentlewoman but just now pencil'd me out to
a hair, I thought, and yet I vow to God the learned'st
word I heard her make use of, was Monster.

Hort. That was a Woman, Sir, a very Woman ; her
Cogitations all were on the outward Man :
But I strike deeper, 'tis the Mind I view.
The Soul's the worthy Object of my Care ;
The Soul, the Sample of Divinity, that glorious
Ray of Heavenly Light. The Soul, that awful
Throne of Thought, that sacred Seat of Contemplation,
The Soul, that noble Source of Wisdom,
That Fountain of Comfort,
That Spring of Joy, that happy Token of eternal
Life ; the Soul, that—

Æsop. Pray, Lady, are you married ?

Hort. Why that Question, Sir ?

Æsop. Only that I might wait upon your Husband to
with him Joy.

Hort. When People of my Composition would marry,
they first find something of their own Species to join
with ; I never could resolve to take a thing of common
Fabrick to my Bed, lest, when his Brutish Inclinations
prompt him, he shou'd make me Mother to a Form like
his own.

Æsop. Methinks a Lady so extremely nice, should be
much at a loss who to converse with.

Hort. I keep my Chamber, and converse with myself ;
'tis better being alone, than to mis-ally one's Conversation :
Men are scandalous, and Women are insipid,
Discourse without Figure makes me sick at my Soul :
O the Charms of a Metaphor !

What Harmony there is in the words of Erudition ;
The Musick of them is inimaginable.

Æsop. Will you hear a Fable, Lady ?

Hort.

Hort. Willingly, Sir, the Apologue pleases me when the Application of it is just.

Æsop. It is, I'll answer for it.

*Once on a time, a Nightingale
To Changes prone ;
Unconstant, fickle, whimsical,
(A Female one)
Who sung like others of her kind,
Hearing a well-taught Linnet's Airs,
Had other matters in her mind,
To imitate him she prepares,
Her Fancy strait was on the Wing :
I fly, quoth she,
As well as he ;
I don't know why
I should not try
As well as he to sing.
From that day forth she chang'd her Note,
She spoil'd her Voice, she strain'd her Throat :
She did, as learned Women do,
Till every thing
That heard her sing,
Wou'd run away from her—as I from you.*

(Exit Æsop running.)

Hortensia sola.

How grossly does this poor World suffer itself to be impos'd upon ?—*Æsop*, a Man of Sense—Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !
ha ! Alas, poor Wretch : I shou'd not have known him but by his Deformity, his Soul's as nauseous to my Understanding, as his odious Body to my Sense of Feeling. Well,

*'Mongst all the Wits that are allow'd to shine,
Metbinks there's nothing yet approaches mine :
Sure I was sent the homely Age t' adorn ;
What Star, I know not, rul'd when I was born,
But every thing, besides myself, 's my Scorn.* *(Exit.)* }

ACT. II.

Enter Euphronia and Doris.

Dor. **W**hat in the name of Jove's the matter with you?
Speak, for Heaven's sake. *Euph.*

Euph. Oh! what shall I do? *Doris*, I'm undone.

Dor. What, ravish'd?

Euph. No, ten times worse! Ten times worse! Unlace me, or I shall swoon.

Dor. Unlace you? Why you are not thereabouts, I hope?

Euph. No, no; worse still; worse than all that.

Dor. Nay, then it's bad indeed. [*Doris unlaces her.* There; How d'ye do now?

Euph. So; it's going over.

Dor. Courage, pluck up your Spirits: Well; now what's the matter?

Euph. The matter! Thou shalt hear. Know that—that Cheat—*Æsop*——

Dor. Like enough; speak: What has he done? That ugly ill-boding Cyclops.

Euph. Why instead of keeping his Promise, and speaking for *Oronces*; he has not said one Word, but what has been for himself. And by my Father's Order, before to-morrow Noon he's to marry me.

Dor. He marry you!——

Euph. Am I in the wrong to be in this Despair? Tell me, *Doris*, if I am to blame?

Dor. To blame? No, by my troth. That ugly, old, treacherous piece of Vermin: That melancholy Mixture of Impotence and Desire: Does his Mouth stand to a young Partridge: Ah the old Goat. And your Father! He downright doats at last then.

Euph. Ah, *Doris*; what a Husband does he give me? And what a Lover does he rob me of? Thou know'st 'em both; think of *Oronces*, and think of *Æsop*.

Dor. [*Spitting.*] A foul Monster. And yet now I think on't, I'm almost as angry at t'other too: Methinks he makes but a slow Voyage on't for a Man in Love: 'Tis now above two Months since he went to *Lesbos*, to pack up the old Bones of his dead Father; sure he might have made a little more haste.

Enter Oronces.

Euph. Oh! my Heart; what do I see?

Dor. Talk of the Devil, and he's at your Elbow.

Oron. My dear Soul.—

[*Euph. runs and leaps about his Neck.*

B

Euph.

Eupb. Why wou'd you stay so long from me ?

Oron. 'Twas not my Fault indeed ; the Winds—

Dor. The Winds! Will the Winds blow you your Mistress again ? We have had Winds too, and Waves into the Bargain, Storms and Tempests, Sea-Monsters and the Devil and-all. She struggled as long as she cou'd, but a Woman can do no more than she can do ; when her Breath was gone, down she sunk.

Oron. What's the meaning of all this ?

Dor. There's meaning and mumping too : Your Mistress is married ; that's all.

Oron. Death and Furies——

Eupb. [*clinging about him.*] Don't you frighten him too much neither, *Doris*. No, my Dear, I'm not yet executed, tho' I'm condemn'd.

Oron. Condemn'd ? To what ? Speak ! Quick !

Dor. To be married.

Oron. Married ? When ? How ? Where ? To what ? To whom ?

Dor. *Æsop*, *Æsop*, *Æsop*, *Æsop*, *Æsop*.

Oron. Fiends and Spectres ! What ! That piece of Deformity ! That Monster ! That Crump !

Dor. The same, Sir, the same. I find he knows him. You might have come home sooner.

Oron. Dear *Euphronia*, ease me from my Pain. Swear that you neither have nor will consent. I know this comes from your ambitious Father ; But you're too generous, too true to leave me : Millions of Kingdoms ne'er wou'd shake my Faith, And I believe your Constancy as firm.

Eupb. You do me Justice, you shall find you do : For Racks and Tortures, Crowns and Scepters join'd, shall neither fright me from my Truth, nor tempt me to be false. On this you may depend.

Dor. Wou'd to the Lord you wou'd find some other Place to make your fine Speeches in. Don't you know that your dear friend *Æsop*'s coming to receive his Visits here ? In this great downy Chair, your pretty little Husband Elect is to sit and hear all the Complaints of the Town : One of Wisdom's chief Recompences, being to be constantly troubled with the Business of Fools. Pray, Madam, will you take the Gentleman by the Hand, and lead

lead him into your Chamber ; and when you are there, don't lie whining, and crying, and sighing, and wishing — [*Aside.*] If he had not been more modest than wise, he might have set such a Mark upon the Goods before now, that ne'er a Merchant of 'em all wou'd have bought 'em out of his Hands. But young Fellows are always in the wrong : Either so impudent they are nauseous, or so modest they are useless. Go, pray get you gone together.

Euph. But if my Father catch us, we are ruin'd.

Dor. By my Conscience this Love will make us all turn Fools. Before your Father can open the Door, can't he slip down the Back-stairs ? I'm sure he may, if you don't hold him ; but that's the old Trade. Ah—Well, get you gone however—Hark—I hear the old Baboon cough ; away ! [*Ex. Oron. and Euph. running.*] Here he comes with his ugly Beak before him. Ah—a luscious Bedfellow, by my troth !

Enter Learchus and Æsop.

Lear. Well, *Doris* ; what News from my Daughter ?
Is she prudent ?

Dor. Yes, very prudent.

Lear. What says she ? What does she do ?

Dor. Do ? What shou'd she do ? Tears her Cornet ; bites her Thumbs ; throws her Fan in the Fire ; thinks it's dark Night at Noon-day ; dreams of Monsters and Hobgoblins ; raves in her Sleep of forc'd Marriage and Cuckoldom : Cries, *Awaunt* Deformity ; then wakens a sudden, with fifty Arguments at her Fingers-ends, to prove the Lawfulness of a Rebellion in a Child, when a Parent turns Tyrant.

Lear. Very fine ! but all this shan't serve her turn. I have said the Word, and will be obey'd—My Lord does her honour.

Dor. [*aside.*] Yes, and that's all he can do to her. [*To Lear.*] But I can't blame the Gentleman after all ; he loves my Mistress, because she's handsome ; and she hates him, because he's ugly. I never saw two People more in the right in my Life. [*To Æsop.*] You'll pardon me, Sir, I'm somewhat free.

Æsop. Why, a Ceremony wou'd but take up time. But, Governor, methinks I have an admirable Advocate about your Daughter.

Lear. Out of the Room, Impudence : be gone, I say.

Dor. So I will : But you'll be as much in the wrong when I'm gone, as when I'm here. And your Conscience, I hope, will talk as pertly to you as I can do.

Æsop. If she treats me thus before my Face, I may conclude I'm finely handled behind my Back.

Dor. I say the Truth here ; and I can say no worse any where. [Exit Doris.]

Lear. I hope your Lordship won't be concern'd at what this prattling Wench bleats out ; my Daughter will be govern'd, she's bred up to Obedience. There may be some small Difficulty in weaning her from her young Lover : But 'twont be the first time she has been wean'd from a Breast, my Lord.

Æsop. Does she love him fondly, Sir ?

Lear. Foolishly, my Lord.

Æsop. And he her ?

Lear. The same.

Æsop. Is he young ?

Lear. Yes, and vigorous.

Æsop. Rich ?

Lear. So, so.

Æsop. Well-born ?

Lear. He has good Blood in his Veins.

Æsop. Has he Wit ?

Lear. He had, before he was in love.

Æsop. And handsome with all this ?

Lear. Or else we shou'd not have half so much trouble with him.

Æsop. Why do you then make her quit him for me ? All the World knows I am neither young, noble, nor rich : And as for my Beauty---Look you, Governor, I'm honest. - But when Children cry, they tell 'em *Æsop's* a-comeing. Pray, Sir, what is it makes you so earnest to force your Daughter ?

Lear. Am I then to count for nothing the favour you are in at Court ? Father-in-law to the great *Æsop* ! What may not I aspire to ? My foolish Daughter perhaps mayn't be so well pleas'd with't, but we wise Parents usually weigh our Children's Happiness in the Scale of our own Inclinations.

Æsop.

Æsop. Well, Governor, let it be your Care then to make her consent.

Lear. This Moment, my Lord, I reduce her either to Obedience, or to Dust and Ashes. [Exit Lear.]

Æsop. Adieu. Now let in the People who come for Audience, [Æsop sits in his Chair reading of Papers.]

Enter two ordinary Tradesmen.

1 Tra. There he is, Neighbour: Do but look at him.

2 Tra. Ay; one may know him: He's well mark'd. But do'st hear me? What Title must we give him? for if we fail in that point, d'ye see me, we shall never get our Business done. Courtiers love Titles almost as well as they do Money, and that's a bold Word now.

1 Tra. Why I think we had best call him, his Grandeur.

2 Tra. That will do; thou hast hit on't. Hold still, let me speak. May it please your Grandeur——

Æsop. There I interrupt you, Friend, I have a weak Body that will ne'er be able to bear that Title.

2 Tra. D'ye hear that, Neighbour? What shall we call him now?

1 Tra. Why, call him, call him, his Excellency; try what that will do.

2 Tra. May it please your Excellency——

Æsop. Excellency's a long Word, it takes up too much time in Business: Tell me what you'd have in few Words.

2 Tra. Neighbour, this Man will never give Ten thousand Pounds to be made a Lord.

But what shall I say to him now?

He puts me quite out of my play.

1 Tra. Why e'en talk to him as we do to one another.

2 Tra. Shall I? Why so I will then. Hem! Neighbour; we want a new Governor, Neighbour.

Æsop. A new Governor, Friend?

1 Tra. Ay, Friend.

Æsop. Why what's the matter with your old one?

2 Tra. What's the matter?

Why he grows rich; that's the matter:

And he that's rich can't be innocent; that's all.

Æsop. Does he use any of you harshly? Or punish you without a Fault?

2 *Tra.* No, but he grows as rich as a Miser; his Purse is so cram'd, it's ready to burst again.

Æsop. When 'tis full 'twill hold no more; a new Governor will have an empty one.

2 *Tra.* 'Fore Gad, Neighbour, the little Gentleman's in the right on't.

1 *Tra.* Why truly I don't know but he may: For now it comes in my Head,
It cost me more Money to fat my Hog,
Than to keep him fat when he was so.
Pr'ythee tell him we'll keep our old Governor.

2 *Tra.* I'll do't. Why, look you, Sir, d'ye see me; having seriously consider'd of the matter, my Neighbour *Hobson*, and I here, we are content to jog on a little longer with him we have; but if you'd do us another Courtesy, you might.

Æsop. What's that, Friend?

2 *Tra.* Why that's this: Our King *Craesus* is a very good Prince, as a Man may say: But—a—but—Taxes are high, an't please you; and—a—poor Men want Money, d'ye see me: It's very hard, as we think, that the Poor shou'd work to maintain the Rich. If there were no Taxes, we shou'd do pretty well.

1 *Tra.* Taxes indeed are very burdensome.

Æsop. I'll tell you a Story Countrymen.

Once on a time, the Hands and Feet,
As Mutineers, grew mighty great;
They met, caball'd, and talk'd of Treason,
They swore by Jove they knew no Reason
The Belly shou'd have all the Meat,
It was a damn'd notorious Cheat,
They did the Work, and — Death and Hell, they'd eat. }

The Belly who ador'd good Chear,
Had like t'have dy'd away for Fear:
Quoth he, good Folks, you littl know
What 'tis you are about to do;
If I am starv'd, what will become of you?
We neither know nor care, cry'd they,
But this we will be bold to say,
We'll see you damn'd
Before we'l work,
And you receive the Pay. }

With

*With that the Hands to Pocket went
Full Wrist-band deep,
The Legs and Feet fell fast asleep:
Their Liberty they had redeem'd,
And all, except the Belly, seem'd
Extremely well content.*

*But mark what follow'd; 'twas not long
Before the right became the wrong,
The Mutineers were grown so weak,
They found 'twas more than time to squeak :*

*They call for work, but 'twas too late.
The Stomach (like an aged Maid,
Sbrunk up, for want of human Aid)
The common Debt of Nature paid,
And with its Destiny entrain'd their Fate.*

}

Æsop. What think you of this Story, Friends, ha ?
Come, you look like wise Men ; I'm sure you understand
what's for your good ; in giving part of what you have,
you secure all the rest : If the King had no Money, there
could be no Army ; and if there were no Army, your
Enemies would be amongst you : One Day's Pillage
would be worse than twenty Years Taxes ! What say ye ?
Is't not so ?

2 Tra. By my troth I think he's in the right on't again.
Who'd think that little Hump back of his
Shou'd have so much Brains in't, Neighbour ?

Æsop. Well, honest Men, is there any thing else that I
can serve you in ?

1 Tra. D'ye hear that, *Humphry* ? — Why that was civil
now. But Courtiers seldom want Good-breeding ; let's
give the Devil his due. Why, to tell you the truth, honest
Gentleman, we had a whole Budget full of Grievances
to complain of. But I think—a—Ha, Neighbour ? We
had e'en as good let 'em alone.

1 Tra. Why good seath I thing so too ; for by all I can
see, we are like to make no great hond on't. Besides,
between thee and me, I begin to daubt, whether aur
Grievances do us such a plaguy deal of Mischief as we
fancy.

2 Tra. Or put the Case they did, *Humphry* ; I'se afraid
he that goes to a Courtier, in hope to get fairly rid of 'em,
may be said, (in aur Country Dialect) to take the wrong
Eow

Sow by the Ear. But here's Neighbour *Roger*, he's Wit, let's leave him to him. [Exeunt]

Enter Roger, a Country Bumpkin, looks seriously upon Æsop; then bursts out a laughing.

Rog. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha: Did ever Mon behold the like? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Æsop. Hast thou any Business with me, Friend?

Rog. Yes, by my troth, have I;
But if *Roger* were to be hang'd up for't,
Look you now, he cou'd not hold laughing:
What I have in my Mind, out it comes: But bar that;
I'se on honest Lad as well as another.

Æsop. My time's dearer to me than yours, Friend; have you any thing to say to me?

Rog. Gadswokers, do People use to ask for Folks when they have nothing to say to 'em? I'se tell you my Business.

Æsop. Let's hear it,

Rog. I have, as you see, a little Wit.

Æsop. True.

Rog. I live in a Village hard by, and I'se the best Man in it, tho' I say it that shou'd not say it. I have good Drink in my Cellar, and good Corn in my Barn; I have Cows and Oxen, Hogs and Sheep, Cocks and Hens, and Geese and Turkeys: But the Truth will out, and so let it out. Pse e'en tired of being call'd plain *Roger*. I has a Leathern Purse, and in that Purse there's many a fair Half-Crown, with the King's sweet Face upon it, God bless him; and with this Money I have a mind to bind myself 'Prentice to a Courtier: It's a good Trade, as I have heard say; there's Money stirring: Let a Lad be but diligent, and do what he's bid, he shall be let into the Secret, and share part of the Profits; I have not lived to these Years for nothing: Those that will swim must go into deep Water: I'se got our Wife *Joan* to be the Queen's Chamber-maid; and then—Crack says me I; and forget all my Acquaintance. But to come to the Business. You who are the King's great Favourite, I desire you'd be pleas'd to sell me some of your Friendship, that I may get a Court-Place. Come, you shall chuse me one yourself; you look like a shrewd Man; by the Mass you do.

Æsop.

Æsop. I chuse thee a Place!

Rog. Yes: I wou'd willingly have it such a sort of a Place, as wou'd cost little, and bring in a great deal; in a Word, much Profit, and nothing to do.

Æsop. But you must name what Post you think wou'd suit your Humour.

Rog. Why, I'se pratty indifferent as to that: Secretary of State, or Butler; twenty Shillings more, twenty Shillings less, is not the thing I stand upon. I'se no Hagler, Godswokers; and he that says I am---- 'Zbud he lies: There's my Humour now.

Æsop. But hark you, Friend, you say you are well as you are, why then do you desire to change?

Rog. Why what a Question now is there for a Man of your Parts? I'm well, d'ye see me; and what of all that? I desire to be better: There's an Answer for you. [*aside.*] Let Roger alone with him.

Æsop. Very well: This is reasoning; and I love a Man should reason with me. But let us enquire a little whether your Reasons are good or not. You say at home you want for nothing.

Rog. Nothing. 'fore George.

Æsop. You have good Drink;

Rog. 'Zbud the best I'th' Parish. [*Singing.*] And dawne it merrily goes my Lad, and dawne it merrily goes.

Æsop. You eat heartily?

Rog. I have a noble Stomach.

Æsop. You sleep well?

Rog. Just as I drink, till I can sleep no longer.

Æsop. You have some honest Neighbours?

Rog. Honest! 'Zbud we are all so, the Twane raund, we live like Brether, when one can serve another, he does it with all his Heart and Guts; when we have any thing that's good, we eat it together, Holidays and Sundays we play at Nine-pins, tumble upon the Grass with wholesome young Maids, laugh till we split, daunce till we are weary, eat till we burst, drink till we are sleepy, then swap into Bed, and snore till we rise to Breakfast.

Æsop. And all this thou wou'dst leave to go to Court. I'll tell thee what once happen'd?

A Mouse,

*A Mouse, who long had liv'd at Court,
 (Yet ne'er the better Christian for't)
 Walking one Day to see some Country Sport,
 He met a home-bred Village-Mouse.
 Who with an awkward Speech and Bow,
 That savour'd much of Cart and Plow,
 Made a shift, I know not how,
 To invite him to his House,
 Quoth he, my Lord, I doubt you'll find
 Our Country Fare of homely kind;
 But by my troth, you're welcome to't,
 I have that, and Bread and Cheese to boot:
 And so they sat and din'd.*

Rog. Very well.

*Æsop. The Courtier cou'd have eat at least
 As much as any Household Priest,
 But thought himself oblig'd in Feeding,
 To shew the difference of Town-breeding;
 He pick'd and cull'd, and turn'd the Meat,
 He champ'd and chew'd, and cou'd not eat:
 No toothless Woman at Fourscore,
 Was ever seen to mumble more.
 He made a thousand ugly Faces,
 Which (as sometimes in Ladies cases)
 Were all design'd for Airs and Graces.*

Rog. Ha, ha.

*Æsop. At last he from the Table rose,
 He pick'd his Teeth, and blow'd his Nose,
 And with an easy Negligence,
 As tho' he lately came from France,
 He made a careless sliding Bow:
 'Fore Gad, quoth he, I don't know how
 I shall return your friendly Treat;
 But if you'll take a bit of Meat
 In Town with me.
 You there shall see
 How we poor Courtiers eat.*

Rog. Tit for that; that was friendly.

*Æsop. There needed no more Invitation
 To e'er Country 'Squire i'th' Nation:
 Exactly to the time he came,
 Punctual as Woman when she meets*

*A Man between a pair of Sheets,
As good a Stomach, and as little Shame.*

Rog. Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho.

*Æsop. To say the Truth, he found good Cheer,
With Wine, instead of Ale and Beer :
But just as they sat down to eat,
Came bouncing in a hungry Cat.*

Rog. O Lord, O Lord, O Lord.

*Æsop. The nimble Courtier skipt from Table,
The 'Squire leapt too, as he was able :
It can't be said that they were beat,
It was no more than a Retreat ;
Which when an Army not to fight
By Day-light, runs away by Night,
Was ever judg'd a great and glorious Feat.*

Rog. Ever, ever, ever.

*Æsop. The Cat retir'd, our Guests return,
The Danger past becomes their Scorn,
They fall to eating as before,
The Butler rumbles at the Door.*

Rog. Good Lord!

Æsop. To Boot and Saddle again they sound.

Rog. Ta ra, tan tan ta ra, ra ra tan ta ra.

*Æsop. They frown, as they won'd stand their Ground,
But (like some of our Friends) they found
'Twas safer much to scour.*

Rog. Tantive, Tantive, Tantive, &c.

*Æsop. At length the 'Squire, who bated Arms,
Was so perplext with these Alarms,
He rose up in a kind of Heat,
Udswokers, gnoth be, with all your Meat,
I will maintain a Dish of Pease,
A Radish, and a Slice of Cheese,
With a good Desert of Ease,
Is a much better Treat,
However,*

*Since every Man shou'd have his due,
I own, Sir, I'm oblig'd to you*

For your Intentions at your Board :

But Pox upon your courtly Crew ———

*Rog. Amen, I pray the Lord. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha !
Now the De'el cuckold me if this Story be not worth a
Sermon.*

Sermon, Give your Hond, Sir.—I it had na' been for your friendly Advice, I was going to be Fool enough, to be Secretary of State.

Æsop. Well, go thy ways home, and be wiser for the future.

Rog. And so I will: For that same Maufe, your Friend, was a witty Person. Gads budlikins; and so our Wife *Joan* shall know: For between you and I, 'tis she has put me upon going to Court. Sir, she has been so proud, so saucy, so rampant, ever since I brought her home a lac'd Pinner, and a pink-coloured pair of Shoe-strings, from *Tickledowne* Fair, the Parson o'th' the Parish can't rule her; and that you'll say's much. But so much for that. Naw I thank you for your good Counsel, honest little Gentleman; and to shew you that I'se not ungrateful—Give me your Hand once more—If you'll take the pains but to walk dawne to our Towne.—a Word in your Ear—I'se send you-so drunk whome again, you shall remember friendly *Roger* as long as you have Breath in your Body.

[*Exit Roger.*]

Æsop solus.

Farewel; what I both envy and despise:
Thy Happiness and Ignorance provoke me.
How noble were the thing call'd Knowledge,
Did it but lead us to a Bliss like thine!
But there's a secret Curse in Wisdom's Train,
Which on its Pleasures stamps perpetual Pain,
And makes the wise Man Loser by his Gain.

[*Exit.*]

A C T. III.

Enter Æsop.

Æsop. **W**HO waits there? [*Enter Servant.*]
If there be any body that has Business with me, let 'em in.

Serv. Yes, Sir.

[*Exit Serv.*]

Enter Quaint, who stands at a distance, making a great many fawning Bows.

Æsop. Well, Friend, who are you?

Quaint. My Name's *Quaint*, Sir, the profoundest of all your Honour's humble Servants.

Æsop.

Æsop. And what may your Business be with me, Sir?

Quaint. My Business, Sir, with every Man, is first of all to do him Service.

Æsop. and your next is, I suppose, to be paid for't twice as much as 'tis worth.

Quaint. Your Honour's most obedient humble Servant.

Æsop. Well, Sir, but upon what account am I going to be oblig'd to you!

Quaint. Sir, I'm a Genealogist.

Æsop. A Genealogist!

Quaint. At your Service, Sir.

Æsop. So, Sir.

Quaint. Sir, I am inform'd from common Fame, as well as from some little private familiar Intelligence, That your Wisdom is entering into Treaty with the *Primum Mobile* of Good and Evil, a fine Lady. I have travell'd Sir; I have read, Sir; I have consider'd, Sir; and I find, Sir, that the Nature of a fine Lady is to be a—fine Lady, Sir; a fine Lady's a fine Lady, Sir, all the World over; she loves a fine House, fine Furniture, fine Clothes, fine Liveries, fine Petticoats, fine Smocks; and if she stops there—she's a fine Lady indeed, Sir. But to come to my Point. It being the *Lydian* Custom, that the fair Bride should be presented on her Wedding-day with something that may signify the Merit and the Worth of her dread Lord and Master, I thought the noble *Æsop's* Pedigree might be the welcom'st Gift that he could offer. If his Honour be of the same Opinion—I'll speak a bold Word; there's ne'er a Herald in all *Asia* shall put better Blood in his Veins, than—Sir, your humble Servant, *Jacob*

Quaint.

Æsop. Dost thou then know my Father, Friend? For I protest to thee I am a Stranger to him.

Quaint. Your Father, Sir, ha, ha! I know every Man's Father, Sir; and every Man's Grandfather, and every Man's Great Grandfather. Why, Sir, I'm a Herald by Nature, my Mother was a *Welchwoman*.

Æsop. A *Welchwoman*? Pr'ythee of what Country's that?

Quaint. That, Sir, is a Country in the World's Back-side, where every Man is born a Gentleman, and a Genealogist. Sir, I cou'd tell my Mother's Pedigree before I could speak plain; which, to shew you the Depth of

my Art, and the Strength of my Memory, I'll trundle you down in an instant. *Noah* had three Sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*; *Shem*——

Æsop. Hold, I conjure thee in the Name of all thy Ancestors.

Quaint. Sir, I cou'd take it higher, but I begin at *Noah* for brevity's sake.

Æsop. No more on't, I intreat thee.

Quaint. Your Honour's impatient, perhaps, to hear your own Descent. *A Word to the wife is enough*. Hem, hem : *Solomon*, the wise King of *Judea*——

Æsop. Hold once more !

Quaint. Ha, ha ; Your Honour's modest, but—*Solomon* the wise King of *Judea*——

Æsop. Was my Ancestor, was he not ?

Quaint. He was, my Lord, which no one sure can doubt, who observes how much of Prince there hangs about you.

Æsop. What ! Is't in my Mein ?

Quaint. You have something---wondrous noble in your Air.

Æsop. Personable too ; view me well.

Quaint. N---not Tall ; but Majestick.

Æsop. My Shape.

Quaint. A World of Symmetry in it.

Æsop. The Lump upon my Back.

Quaint. N---not regular ; but agreeable.

Æsop. Now by my Honesty thou art a Villain, Herald. But Flattery's a Thrust I never fail to parry. 'Tis a Pass thou should'st reserve for young Fencers ; with Feints like those they're to be hit : I do not doubt but thou hast found it so ; hast not ?

Quaint. I must confess, Sir, I have sometimes made 'em bleed by't. But I hope your Honour will please to excuse me, since, to speak the truth, I get my Bread by't, and maintain my Wife and Children. And Industry, you know, Sir, is a commendable thing. Besides, Sir, I have debated the Business a little with my Conscience ; for I'm like the rest of my Neighbours, I'd willingly get Money, and be sav'd too, if the thing may be done upon any reasonable Terms : And so, Sir, I say, to quiet my

my Conscience, I have found out at last, that Flattery is a Duty.

Æsop. A Duty!

Quaint. Ay, Sir, a Duty; For the Duty of all Men is to make one another pass their time as pleasantly as they can. Now, Sir, here's a young Lord, who has a great deal of Land, a great deal of Title, a great deal of Meat, a great deal of Noise, a great many Servants, and a great many Diseases. I find him very dull, very restless, tir'd with Ease, cloy'd with Plenty, a Burden to himself, and a Plague to his Family. I begin to flatter: He springs off of the Couch; turns himself round in the Glais; finds all I say true; cuts a Caper a yard high; his Blood trickles round his Veins; his Heart's as light as his Heels; and before I leave him---his Purse is as empty as his Head. So we both are content; for we part much happier than we met.

Æsop. Admirable Rogue! what dost thou think of Murder and of Rape, are not they Duties too? Were't not for such vile fawning things as thou art, young Nobles wou'd not long be what they are: They'd grow ashamed of Luxury and Ease, and rouse up the old Spirit of their Fathers; leave the pursuit of a poor frightened Hare, and make their Foes to tremble in her stead: furnish their Heads with Sciences and Arts, and fill their Hearts with Honour, Truth and Friendship; be generous to some, and just to all: drive home their Creditors with Bags of Gold, instead of chasing 'em away with Swords and Staves; be faithful to their King and Country both, and stab the Offerer of a Bribe from either; blush even at a wandring Thought of Vice, and boldly own they durst be Friends to Virtue; trembling at nothing but the Frowns of Heaven, and be no more ashamed of him that made 'em.

Quaint. [*aside.*] If I stand to hear this Crump preach a little longer, I shall be Fool enough perhaps to be bubbled out of my Livelihood, and to lose a Bird in the Hand for two in the Bush. Sir, since I have not been able to bring you to a good Opinion of yourself, 'tis very probable I shall scarce prevail with you to have one of me. But if you please to do me the favour to forget me,

I shall ever acknowledge myself---Sir, your most obedient, faithful, humble Servant.

Æsop. Hold ; if I let thee go, and give thee nothing, thou'lt be apt to grumble at me ; and therefore---who waits there ?

Enter Servant,

Quaint. [*aside.*] I don't like his Looks, by Gad.

Æsop. I'll present thee with a Token of my Love.

Quaint. A --another time, Sir, will do as well.

Æsop. No ; I love to be out of Debt, tho' 'tis being out of the Fashion. So, d'ye hear ! Give this honest Gentleman half a score good strokes on the Back with a Cudgel.

Quaint. By no means in the World, Sir.

Æsop. Indeed, Sir, you shall take 'em.

Quaint. Sir, I don't merit half your Bounty.

Æsop. O 'tis but a Trifle.

Quaint. Your Generosity makes me blush.

[Looking about to make his Escape.

Æsop. That's your Modesty, Sir.

Quaint. Sir, you are pleased to compliment. But a---twenty Pedigrees for a clear Coast.

[Running off, the Servant after him.

Æsop. Wait upon him down Stairs, Fellow ; I'd do't myself, were I but nimble enough ; but he makes haste, to avoid Ceremony.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's a Lady in great haste, desires to speak with you.

Æsop. Let her come in.

Enter Aminta, weeping.

Amin. O Sir, if you don't help me, I'm undone.

Æsop. What, what's the matter, Lady ?

Amin. My Daughter, Sir, my Daughter's run away with a filthy Fellow.

Æsop. A slippery Trick indeed ?

Amin. For Heaven's sake, Sir, send immediately to pursue 'em, and seize 'em. But 'tis in vain, 'twill be too late, 'twill be too late ; I'll warrant at this very moment they are got together in a Room with a Couch in't ; all's gone, all's gone ; tho' 'twere made of Gold 'tis lost :
Oh!

Oh! my Honour, my Honour. A forward Girl she was always; I saw it in her Eyes the very Day of her Birth.

Æsop. That indeed was early; but how do you know she's gone with a Fellow?

Amin. I have e'en her own insolent Hand-writing for't: Sir, take but the pains to read what a Letter she has left me.

Æsop. Reads.

I love and am belov'd, and that's the Reason I run away.

Short, but significant!—I'm sure there's no Body knows better than your Ladyship what Allowances are to be made to Flesh and Blood; I therefore hope this from your Justice, that what you have done three times yourself, you'll pardon once in your Daughter. The Dickens!

Amin. Now, Sir, what do you think of the Business?

Æsop. Why truly, Lady, I think it one of the most natural Businessses I have met with a great while. I'll tell you a Story.

*A Crab-fish once her Daughter told,
(In Terms that savour'd much of Scold)
She cou'd not bear to see her go,
Sidle, sidle. to and fro;
The Devil's in the Wench, quoth she,
When so much Money has been paid,
To polish you like me;
It makes me almost mad to see
Y^e are still so awkward, an ungainly Jade.*

*Her Daughter smil'd, and look'd a-skew,
She answer'd (for to give her her due)
Pert'y, as most Folks Daughters do:
Madam, your Ladyship, quoth she,
Is pleas'd to blame in me
What, on Enquiry, you may find,
Admits a passable Excuse,
From a Proverb much in use,
That Cat will after kind.*

Amin. Sir, I took you to be a Man better bred, than to liken a Lady to a Crab-fish.

Æsop. What I want in Good-breeding. Lady, I have in Truth and Honesty: As what you have wanted in Virtue, you have had in a good Face.

Amin. Have had, Sir! What I have had, I have still; and shall have a great while, I hope, I'm no Grand-mother, Sir.

Æsop. But in a fair way for't, Madam.

Amin. Thanks to my Daughter's Forwardness then, not my Years. I'd have you to know, Sir, I have never a Wrinkle in my Face. A young pert Slut! who'd think she shou'd know so much at her Age?

Æsop. Good Masters make quick Scholars, Lady; she has learn'd her Exercise from you.

Amin. But where's the Remedy, Sir?

Æsop. In trying if a good Example will reclaim her, as an ill one has debauch'd her. Live private, and avoid Scandal.

Amin. Never speak it; I can no more retire, than I can go to Church twice of a Sunday.

Æsop. What, your youthful Blood boils in your Veins, I'll warrant?

Amin. I have Warmth enough to endure the Air, old Gentleman. I need not shut myself up in a House these twenty Years.

Æsop. [*aside.*] She takes a long Lease of Leudness: She'll be an admirable Tenant to Lust.

Amin. [*walking hastily to and fro.*] People think when a Woman is turn'd Forty, she's old enough to turn out of the World: But I say, when a Woman is turn'd Forty, she's old enough to have more Wit. The most can be said is, her Face is the worse for wearing: I'll answer for all the rest of her Fabrick. The Men wou'd be to be pity'd, by my troth, wou'd they, if we shou'd quit the Stage, and leave 'em nothing but a parcel of young pert Sluts, that neither know how to speak Sense, nor keep themselves clean. But don't let 'em fear, we an't going yet—[*Æsop stares upon her, and as she turns from him, runs off the Stage.*] How now! What left alone! An unmannerly Piece of Deformity! Methinks he might have had Sense enough to have made Love to me. But I have found Men strangely dull for the last ten or twelve Years: Sure they'll mend in time, or the World won't be worth living in.

For let Philosophers say all they can,

The Source of Woman's Joy is plac'd in Man.

[Exit.

Enter

Enter Learchus and Euphronia, Doris following at a Distance.

Lear. to Euph.] I must tell you, Mistress, I'm too mild with you ; Parents shou'd never intreat their Children, nor will I hereafter. Therefore, in a word, let *Æsop* be lov'd, let *Oronces* be hated, let one be a Peacock, let t'other be a Bat : I'm Father, you are Daughter ; I command, and you shall obey.

Euph. I never yet did otherwise ; nor shall I now, Sir ; but pray let Reason guide you.

Lear. So it does : But 'tis my own, not yours, Hussy.

Dor. Ah---Well, I'll say no more ; but were I in her Place, by the Ma's I'd have a tug for't.

Lear. Dæmon, born to distract me. Whence art thou, in the Name of Fire and Brimstone? Have I not satisfy'd thee? Have I not paid thee what's thy due? And have not I turn'd thee out of Doors, with Orders never more to stride my Threshold, ha? Answer, abominable Spirit ; what is't that makes thee haunt me?

Dor. A foolish Passion, to do you good in spite of your Teeth : Pox on me for my Zeal, I say.

Lear. And Pox on thee, and thy Zeal too, I say.

Dor. Now if it were not for her sake more than for yours, I'd leave all to your own Management, to be reveng'd of you. But rather than I'll see that sweet thing sacrificed—I'll play the Devil in your House.

Lear. Patience, I summon thee to my Aid.

Dor. Passion, I defy thee ; to the last Drop of my Blood I'll maintain my Ground. What have you to charge me with? speak : I love your Child better than you do, and you can't bear that, ha? Is't not so? Nay, it's well y'are asham'd on't ; there's some sign of Grace still. Look you, Sir, in few Words, you'll make me mad ; and 'twere enough to make any body mad (who has Brains enough to be so) to see so much Virtue shipwreck'd at the very Port. The World never saw a Virgin better qualify'd ; so witty, so discreet, so modest, so chaste : in a Word, I brought her up myself, and 'twould be the Death of me, to see so virtuous a Maid become a lewd Wife? which is the usual Effect of Parents Pride and Covetousness.

Lear.

Lear. How, Strumpet ! wou'd any thing be able to debauch my Daughter ?

Dor. Your Daughter ! yes, your Daughter, and myself into the Bargain : A Woman's but a Woman ; and I'll lay a hundred Pound on Nature's side. Come, Sir, few Words dispatch Business. Let who will be the Wife of *Æsop*, she's a Fool, or he's a Cuckold. But you'll never have a true Notion of this Matter, till you suppose yourself in your Daughter's Place. As thus : You are a pretty, soft, warm, wishing young Lady : I'm a strait, proper, handsome, vigorous, young Fellow. You have a peevish, positive, covetous, old Father, and he forces you to marry a little, lean, crooked, dry, sapless Husband. This Husband's gone abroad, you are left at home. I make you a Visit ; find you are all alone : The Servant pulls to the Door ; the Devil comes in at the Window. I begin to wheedle, you begin to melt : You like my Person, and therefore believe all I say ; so first I make you an Atheist, and then I make you a Whore. Thus the World goes, Sir.

Lear. Pernicious Pestilence ! Has not thy eternal Tongue run down its Larum yet ?

Dor. Yes.

Lear. Then go out of my House, Abomination.

Dor. I'll not stir a Foot.

Lear. Who waits there ? Bring me my great Stick.

Dor. Bring you a Stick ! bring you a Head-piece : that you'd call for, if you knew your own wants.

Lear. Death and Furies, the Devil, and so forth ; I shall run distracted.

Euph. Pray, Sir, don't be so angry at her. I'm sure she means well, tho' she may have an odd way of expressing herself.

Lear. What, you like her meaning ? who doubts it, Offspring of *Venus* ? But I'll make you stay your Stomach with Meat of my chusing, you liquorish young Baggage you. In a word, *Æsop's* the Man ; and to-morrow he shall be your Lord and Master. But since he can't be satisfied unless he has your Heart, as well as all the rest of your Trumpery, let me see you receive him in such a manner that he may think himself your Choice as well as mine ; 'twill make him esteem your Judgment :

For

For we usually guess at other People's Understandings, by their approving our Actions and liking our Faces. See here the great Man comes! [*To Dor.*] Follow me, Insolence; and leave 'em to express their Passion to each other. [*To Euph.*] Remember my last Word to you is, Obey.

Dor. [*to Euph. aside.*] And remember my last Advice to you is, Rebel. [*Exit Lear. Dor. following him.*]

Euph. Alas, I'm good-natured: the last thing that's said to me usually leaves the deepest Impression.

Enter Æsop; they stand some time without speaking.

Æsop.—They say, That Lovers, for want of Words, have Eyes to speak with. I'm afraid you do not understand the Language of mine, since yours, I find, will make no Answer to 'em. But I must tell you, Lady, there is a numerous Train of youthful Virgins, that are endow'd with Wealth and Beauty too, who yet have thought it worth their Pains and Care to point their Darts at *Æsop's* homely Breast; whilst you so much condemn what they pursue, that a young senseless Fop's prefer'd before me.

Euph. Did you but know that Fop you dare to term so, his very Looks wou'd fright you into nothing.

Æsop. A very Bauble.

Euph. How!

Æsop. A Butterfly.

Euph. I can't bear it.

Æsop. A Parroquet, can prattle and look gaudy.

Euph. It may be so; but let me paint him and you in your proper Colours, I'll do it exactly, and you shall judge which I ought to chuse.

Æsop. No, hold; I'm naturally not over curious; besides, 'tis Pride makes People have their Pictures drawn.

Euph. Upon my word, Sir, you may have yours taken a hundred times before any Body will believe 'tis done upon that account.

Æsop. [*aside.*] How severe she is upon me! You are resolv'd then to persist, and be fond of your Feather; sigh for a Perriwig, and die for a Cravat-string.

Euph. Methinks, Sir, you might treat with more respect what I've thought fit to own I value; your Affronts to him are doubly such to me; if you continue your provoking

voking Language, you must expect my Tongue will fall too; and if you are as wise as some would make you, you can't but know I shou'd have Theme enough?

Æsop. But is it possible you can love so much as you pretend?

Euph. Why do you question it?

Æsop. Because no Body loves so much as they pretend: But hark you, young Lady, Marriage is to last a long, long time; and where one Couple blest the sacred Knot, a Train of Wretches curse the Institution. You are in an Age where Hearts are young and tender, a pleasing Object gets Admittance soon. But since to Marriage there's annex'd this dreadful Word, *For ever*, the following Example ought to move you.

*A Peacock once of splendid show,
Gay, gaudy, foppish, vain—a Beau,
Attack'd a fond young Pheasant's Heart
With such Success,
He pleas'd her, tho' he made her smart;
He pierc'd her with so much Address,
She smil'd the Moment that he fixed his Dart.*

*A Cuckow in a neighbouring Tree,
Rich, honest, ugly, old—like me,
Lov'd her as he lov'd his Life:
No pamper'd Priest e'er study'd more
To make a virtuous Nun a Whore,
Than he to get her for his Wife,
But a'l his Offers still were vain,
His Limbs were weak, his Face was plain;
Beauty, Youth, and Vigour weigh'd
With the warm desiring Maid:
No Bird she cry'd, wou'd serve her turn,
But what cou'd quench as well as burn,
She'd have a young Gallant; so one she had.
But ere a Month was come and gone,
The Bride began to change her tone,
She found a young Gallant was an inconstant one.
She wander'd to a neighbouring Grove,
Where after musing long on Love,
She told her Confident, she found
When for one's Life one must be bound,*

(The

*(Tho' Youth indeed was a delicious Bait)
 An aged Husband, rich, tho' plain,
 Wou'd give a slavish Wife less Pain;
 And what was more, was sooner slain,
 Which was a thing of weight.*

}

Behold, young Lady, here, the Cuckow of the Fable;
 I'm deform'd 'tis true, yet I have found the means to
 make a Figure amongst Men, that well has recompens'd
 the Wrongs of Nature; my Rival's Beauty promises you
 much; perhaps my homely Form might yield you more;
 at least consider on't, 'tis worth your Thought.

Euph. I must confess, my Fortune wou'd be greater;
 But what's a Fortune to a Heart like mine?
 'Tis true, I'm but a young Philosopher,
 Yet in that little space my Glas has run,
 I've spent some time in search of Happiness:
 The fond Pursuit I soon observ'd of Riches,
 Inclined me to enquire into their Worth:
 I found their Value was not in themselves,
 But in their Power to grant what we cou'd ask.
 I then proceeded to my own Desires,
 To know what state of Life wou'd suit with them:
 I found 'em moderate in their Demands,
 They neither ask'd for Title, State, or Power:
 They slighted the aspiring Post of Envy:
 'Tis true, they trembled at the Name Contempt;
 A general Esteem was all they wish'd;
 And that I did not doubt might be obtain'd,
 If furnish'd but with Virtue and Good-nature;
 My Fortune prov'd sufficient to afford me
 Conveniences of Life, and Independance.
 This, Sir, was the Result of my Enquiry;
 And by this Scheme of Happiness I build,
 When I prefer the Man I love to you.

Æsop. How wise, how witty, and how cleanly, young
 Women grow, as soon as ever they are in love!

Euph. How soppyish, how impertinent, and how nau-
 seous old Men, when they pretend to be so too!

Æsop. How pert is Youth!

Euph. How dull is Age!

Æsop. Why so sharp, young Lady?

Euph. Why so blunt, old Gentleman?

Æsop.

Æsop. 'Tis enough ; I'll to your Father, I know how to deal with him, tho' I don't know how to deal with you. Before to-morrow Noon, Damfel, Wite shall be written on your Brow. [Exit *Æsop.*

Euph. Then before to-morrow Night, Statesman, Husband shall be stamp't upon your Forehead.

[Exit *Euph.*

A C T. IV.

Enter Oronces and Doris.

Dor. **P**atience, I beseech you.

Oron. Patience ! What, and see that lovely Creature thrown into the Arms of that pedantick Monster : 'Sdeath, I'd rather see the World reduc'd to Atoms, Mankind turn'd into Crawfish, and myself an old Woman.

Dor. So you think an old Woman a very unfortunate thing, I find ; but you are mistaken, Sir ; she may plague other Folks, but she's as entertaining to herself, as any one part of the Creation.

Oron. [*walking to and fro.*] She's the Devil—and I'm one of the damn'd, I think. But I'll make somebody howl for't, I will so.

Dor. You'll e'en do as all the young Fellows in the Town do, spoil your own Sport : Ah—had young Mens Shoulders but old Courtiers Heads upon 'em, what a delicious Time wou'd they have on't ! For shame be wise ; for your Mistress's sake at least use some Caution.

Oron. For her sake I'll respect, even like a Deity, her Father. He shall strike me, he shall tread upon me, and find me humbler even than a crawling Worm, for I'll not turn again ; but for *Æsop*, that unfinish'd Lump, that Chaos of Humanity, I'll use him—nay, expect it, for I'll do't—the first Moment that I see him, I'll—

Dor. Not challenge him, I hope—'Twould be a pretty fight truly, to see *Æsop* drawn up in Battalia ; Fye for shame, be wise once in your Life ; think of gaining time, by putting off the Marriage for a Day or two, and not of waging War with a Pigmy. Yonder's the old Gentleman walking by himself in the Gallery ; go and wheedle him,

him, you know his weak side ; he's good-natur'd in the bottom. Stir up his old fatherly Bowels a little, I'll warrant you'll move him at last : go, get you gone, and play your Part discreetly.

Oron. Well, I'll try ; but if Words won't do with one, Blows shall with t'other ; by Heavens they shall.

[*Exit Oron.*]

Doris sola.

Nay, I reckon we shall have rare work on't by and by. Shield us, kind Heaven ; what things are Men in love ? Now they are Stocks and Stones ; then they are Fire and Quick-silver ; first whining and crying, then swearing and damning : This Moment they are in love, and next Moment they are out of love ; Ah—cou'd we but live without 'em — but it's in vain to think on't. [*Exit.*]

Enter Æsop at one side of the Stage, Mrs. Forge-will at t'other.

Forg. Sir, I'm your most devoted Servant : What I say is no Compliment, I do assure you.

Æsop. Madam, as far as you are really mine, I believe I may venture to assure you, I am yours.

Forg. I suppose, Sir, you know that I'm a Widow.

Æsop. Madam, I don't so much as know you are a Woman.

Forg. O surprizing ! Why I thought the whole Town had known it. Sir, I have been a Widow this Twelve-month.

Æsop. If a Body may guess at your Heart by your Petticoat, Lady, you don't design to be so a Twelve-month more.

Forg. O blefs me ! Not a Twelve-month ! Why, my Husband has left me four squawling Brats. Besides, Sir, I'm undone.

Æsop. You seem as chearful an undone Lady as I have met with.

Forg. Alas, Sir, I have too great a Spirit ever to let Afflictions spoil my Face. Sir, I'll tell you my Condition ; and that will lead me to my Business with you. Sir, my Husband was a Scrivener.

Æsop. The *deux* he was : I thought he had been a Count at least.

D

Forg.

Forg. Sir, it is not the first time I have been taken for a Countess; my Mother us'd to say as I lay in my Cradle, I had the Air of a Woman of Quality; and truly I have always liv'd like such. My Husband, indeed, had something sneaking in him (as most Husbands have, you know, Sir) but from the Moment I set Foot in his House, bless me, what a Change was there! his Pewter was turn'd into Silver, his Goloshoes into a Glass Coach, and his little travelling Mare into a pair of *Flunders* Horses. Instead of a greasy Cook maid to wait at Table, I had four tall Footmen in clean Linen; all Things became new and fashionable, and nothing look'd aukward in my Family. My Furniture was the Wonder of my Neighbourhood, and my Clothes the Admiration of the whole Town; I had a Necklace that was envy'd by the Queen, and a pair of Pendants that set a Dutche's a crying. In a Word, I saw nothing I lik'd but I bought it; and my Husband, good Man, durst ne'er refuse paying for't. Thus I liv'd, and I flourish'd, till he sicken'd and dy'd. but ere he was cold in his Grave, his Creditors plunder'd my House. But what pity it was to see Fellows with dirty Shoes come into my best Rooms, and touch my Hangings with their filthy Fingers! you won't blame me, Sir, if with all my Courage I weep at this sensible part of my Misfortune.

Æsop. A very sad Story, truly!

Forg. But now, Sir, to my Business. Having been inform'd this Morning, That the King has appointed a great Sum of Money for the Marriage of young Women who have liv'd well, and are fallen to decay, I am come to acquaint you I have two strapping Daughters just fit for the Matter, and to desire you'll help 'em to Portions out of the King's Bounty; that they mayn't whine and pine, and be eaten up with the Green-sickness, as half the young Women of the Town are, or wou'd be, if there were not more Helps for the Disease than one. This, Sir, is my Business.

Æsop. And this, Madam, is my Answer.

*A crawling Toad, all speckled o'er,
Vain, gaudy, painted, patch'd—a Whore,
Seeing a well-fed Ox hard by,
Regards him with an envious Eye,*

And

*And (as the Poets tell)
Ye Gods, I cannot bear't, quoth she,
I'll burst, or be as big as he,
An so began to swell.*

*Her Friends and Kindred round her came,
They shew'd her she was much to blame,
The thing was out of reach.
She told 'em they were busy Folks,
And when her Husband wou'd barve spoke,
She bid him kiss her Br——
With that they all e'en gave her o'er,
And she persisted as before,
Till with a deal of Strife
She swell'd at last so much her Spleen,
She burst like one that we have seen,
Who was a Scrivener's Wife.*

This, Widow, I take to be your Case, and that of a great many others; for this is an Age where most People get Falls by clambering too high, to reach at what they should not do. The Shoemaker's Wife reduces her Husband to a Cobler, by endeavouring to be as spruce as the Taylor's: The Taylor's brings hers to a Botcher, by going as fine as the Mercer's: The Mercer's lowers hers to a Foreman, by perking up to the Merchant's: The Merchant's wears hers to a Broker, by strutting up to Quality: And Quality brings theirs to nothing, by striving to outdo one another. If Women were humbler, Men wou'd be honefter. Pride brings Want, Want makes Rogues, Rogues come to be hang'd, and the Devil alone's the Gainer. Go your ways home, Woman; and as your Husband maintain'd you by his Pen, maintain yourself by your Needle; put your great Girls to Service, Employment will keep 'em honest; much Work, and plain Diet, will cure the Green-Sickness as well as a Husband——

Forg. Why, you pityful Pigmy, preaching, canting, Pickthank; you little, sorry, crooked, dry, wither'd Eunuch, do you know that——

Æsop. I know that I'm so deform'd you han't Wit enough to describe me; But I have this good Quality, That a foolish Woman can never make me angry.

Forg. Can't she so! I'll try that, I will. [*She falls upon him, holds his Hands, and boxes his Ears.*]

Æsop. Help, help, help.

Enter Servants, She runs off, they after her.

Æsop. Nay e'en let her go—let her go—don't bring her back again—I'm for making a Bridge of Gold for my Enemy to retreat upon—I'm quite out of Breath—A terrible Woman, I protest.

Enter a Country Gentleman drunk, in a hunting Dress, with a Huntsman, Groom, Faulkner, and other Servants; one leading a couple of Hounds, another Grey-hounds, a third a Spaniel, a fourth a Gun upon his Shoulder, the Faulkner a Hawk upon his Fist, &c.

Gent. Haux, haux, haux, haux, haux: Joular, there Boy, Joular, Joular, Tinker, Pedlar, Miss, Miss, Miss, Miss—Blood and Oons—O there he is; that must be he, I have seen his Picture, [*Reeling upon Æsop*—Sir—if your Name's *Æsop*—I'm your humble Servant.

Æsop. Sir, my Name is *Æsop*, at your Service.

Gent. Why then, Sir—Compliments being past on both sides, with your leave—we'll proceed to Business. Sir, I'm by Profession—a Gentleman of—three thousand Pounds a Year—Sir, I keep a good Pack of Hounds, and a good Stable of Horses. [*To his Groom.*] How many Horses have I, Sirrah?—Sir, this is my Groom, [*Presenting him to Æsop.*]

Groom. Your Worship has six Coach-horses, (Cut and Long-Tail) two Runners, half a dozen Hunters, four breeding Mares, and two blind Stallions, besides Pads, Routs, and Dog-Horses.

Gent. Look you there, Sir, I scorn to tell a Lye. He that questions my Honour—he's a Son of a Whore. But to Business—Having heard, Sir, that you were come to this Town, I have taken the Pains to come hither too, tho' I had a great deal of Business upon my Hands, for I have appointed three *Justices of the Peace* to hunt with 'em this Morning—and be drunk with 'em in the Afternoon. But the main Chance must be look'd to—and that's this—I desire Sir, you'll tell the King from me—I don't like these Taxes—in one Word, as well as in twenty—I don't like these Taxes.

Æsop.

Æsop. Pray, Sir, how high may you be tax'd?

Gent. How high may I be tax'd, Sir! Why I may be tax'd, Sir—four Shillings in the Pound, Sir; one half I pay in Money—and t'other half I pay in Perjury, Sir: Hey, Joular, Joular, Joular, Haux, haux, haux, haux, haux. Hoo, hoo—Here's the best Hound-bitch in *Europe*. Zoons is she. And I had rather kiss her than kiss my Wife—Rot me if I had not—But, Sir, I don't like these Taxes.

Æsop. Why how wou'd you have the War carry'd on?

Gent. War carried on, Sir!—Why, I had rather have no War carried on at all, Sir, than pay Taxes. I don't desire to be ruin'd, Sir.

Æsop. Why you say you have three thousand Pounds a Year.

Gent. And so I have, Sir—*Lett-Acre*. Sir, this is my Steward. How much Land have I, *Lett-Acre*?

Lett-Acre. Your Worship has three thousand Paunds a Year, as good Lond as any's i't'h Cauntry; and two thousand Paunds worth of Wood to cut dawne at your Worship's Pleasure, and put the Money in your Pocket.

Gent. Look you there, Sir, what have you to say to that?

Æsop. I have to say, Sir, that you may pay your Taxes in Money, instead of Perjury, and still have a better Revenue than I'm afraid you deserve. What Service do you do your King, Sir?

Gent. None at all, Sir—I'm above it.

Æsop. What Service may you do your Country,?

Gent. I'm Justice of the Peace—and Captain of the Militia.

Æsop. Of what use are you to your Kindred?

Gent. I'm the Head of the Family, and have all the Estate.

Æsop. What Good do you do your Neighbours?

Gent. I give them their Bellies full of Beef every time they come to see me; and make 'em so drunk, they spew it up again before they go away.

Æsop. How do you use your Tenants?

Gent. Why, I skrew up their Rents till they break and run away, and if I catch 'em again, I let 'em rot in a Goal.

Æsop. How do you treat your Wife ?

Gent. I treat her all Day with Ill-nature and Tobacco, and all Night with snoring and a dirty Shirt.

Æsop. How do you breed your Children ?

Gent. I breed my eldest Son—a Fool ; my youngest breed themselves, and my Daughters—have no Breeding at all.

Æsop. 'Tis very well, Sir, I shall be sure to speak to the King of you ; or if you think fit to remonstrate to him, by way of Petition or Address, how reasonable it may be to let Men of your Importance go Scot-free, in the time of a necessary War, I'll deliver it in Council, and speak to it as I ought.

Gent. Why, Sir, I don't disapprove your Advice, but my Clerk is not here, and I can't spell well.

Æsop. You may get it writ at your leisure, and send it me. But because you are not much us'd to draw up Addresses, perhaps I'll tell you in general what kind of one this ought to be.

May it please your Majesty————

To the Gent.] You'll excuse me if I don't know your Name and Title.

Gent. Sir Polydorus Hogstye, of Beasthall in Swine-County.

Æsop. Very well.

May it please your Majesty ; Polydorus Hogstye, of Beasthall in Swine-County, most humbly represents, That he bates to pay Taxes, the dreadful Consequences of 'em being inevitably these, That he must retrench two Dishes in ten, where not above six of 'em are design'd for Gluttony.

Four Bottles out of twenty ; where not above fifteen of 'em are for Drunkenness.

Six Horses out of thirty ; of which not above twenty are kept for State.

And four Servants out of a Score ; where one half do nothing but Work for t'other.

To this deplorable Condition must your important Subject be reduc'd, or forc'd to cut down his Timber, which he would willingly preserve against an ill run at Dice.

And as to the Necessity of the War for the Security of the Kingdom, he neither knows nor cares whether it be necessary or not.

He

He concludes with his Prayers for your Majesty's Life, upon Condition you will protect him and his Fox-Hounds at Beast-Hall without e'er a Penny of Money.

To the Gent.] This, Sir, I suppose, is much what you wou'd be at.

Gent. Exactly, Sir, I'll be sure to have one drawn up to the self-same purpose ; and next Fox Hunting I'll engage half the Company shall set their Hands to't. Sir, I am your—most devoted Servant ; and if you please to let me see you at *Beast-Hall*, here's my Huntsman Hounds-foot will shew you a Fox shall lead you through so many Hedges and Briars, you shall have no more Clothes on your Back in half an Hour's time—than you had---in the Womb of your Mother. Haux, haux, haux, &c.

[Exit shouting.]

Æsop. O Tempora, O Mores !

Enter Mr. Fruitful, and his Wife.

Mr. Fruit. Heavens preserve the noble *Æsop*, grant him long Life and happy Days.

Mrs. Fruit. And send him a fruitful Wife, with a hopeful Issue.

Æsop. And what is it I'm to do for you, good People, to make you amends for all these friendly Wishes ?

Mr. Fruit. Sir, here's myself and my Wife---

Mrs. Fruit. Sir, here's I and my Husband --*[To her Husband.]* Let me speak in my turn, Goodman Forward. *[To Æsop.]* Sir, here's I and my Husband, I say, think we have as good Pretensions to the King's Favour as ever a Lord in the Land.

Æsop. If you have no better than some Lords in the Land, I hope you won't expect much for your Service.

Mr. Fruit. An't please you, you shall be judge yourself.

Mrs. Fruit. That's as he gives Sentence, Mr. Littlewit ; who gave you power to come to a Reference ? If he does not do us right, the King himself shall ; what's to be done here ? *[To Æsop.]* Sir, I'm forc'd to correct my Husband a little ; poor Man, he is not us'd to Court-Business ; but to give him his due, he's ready enough at some things : Sir, I have had twenty fine Children by him ; fifteen of 'em are alive, and alive like to be ; five tall

tall Daughters are wedded and bedded, and ten proper Sons serve their King and their Country.

Æsop. A goodly Company, upon my Word!

Mrs. Fruit. Would all Men take as much pains for the peopling of the Kingdom, we might tuck up our Aprons, and cry a Fig for our Enemies; but we have such a Parcel of Drones amongst us--Hold up your Head, Husband--He's a little out of Countenance, Sir, because I chid him; but the Man is a very good Man at the Bottom. But to come to my Business, Sir, I hope his Majesty will think it reasonable to allow me something for the Service I have done him; 'tis pity but Labour shou'd be encourag'd, especially when what one has done, one has don't with a Good-will.

Æsop. What Profession are you of, good People?

Mrs. Fruit. My Husband's an Inn-keeper, Sir; he bears the Name, but I govern the House.

Æsop. And what Posts are your Sons in, in the Service?

Mrs. Fruit. Sir, there are four Monks.

Mr. Fruit. Three Attorneys.

Mrs. Fruit. Two Scriveners.

Mr. Fruit. And an Exciseman.

Æsop. The deux o'the Service; why, I thought they had been all in the Army.

Mrs. Fruit. Not one, Sir.

Æsop. No, so it seems, by my troth: Ten Sons that serve their Country, quoth a! Monks, Attorneys, Scriveners and Excisemen, serve their Country with a vengeance; you deserve to be rewarded, truly; you deserve to be hang'd, you wicked People, you. Get you gone out of my sight. I never was so angry in my Life.

[Exit *Æsop.*

Mr. Fruit. to his Wife.] So; who's in the right now, you or I? I told you what wou'd come on't; you must be always a Breeding, and Breeding, and the King wou'd take care of 'em, and the Queen wou'd take care of 'em: And always some Pretence or other there was. But now we have got a great Kennel of Whelps, and the Devil will take care of 'em for ought I see. For your Sons are all Rogues, and your Daughters are all Whores, you know they are.

Mrs.

Mrs. Fruit. What, you are a grudging of your Pains now, you lazy, sluggish, flegmatick Drone. You have a mind to die of a Lethargy, have you? but I'll raise your Spirits for you, I will so. Get you gone home, go; go home, you idle Sot, you; I'll raise your Spirits for you.

[*Exit, pushing him before her.*]

Re-enter Æsop.

Æsop. solus.] Monks, Attorneys, Scriveners, and Excisemen!

Enter Oronces.

Oron. O here he is. Sir, I have been searching for you, to say two Words to you.

Æsop. And now you have found me, Sir, what are they?

Oron. They are, Sir—that my Name's *Oronces*: You comprehend me.

Æsop. I comprehend your Name.

Oron. And not my Business?

Æsop. Not I, by my troth.

Oron. Then I shall endeavour to teach it you, Monsieur *Æsop*.

Æsop. And I to learn it, Monsieur *Oronces*.

Oron. Know, Sir—that I admire *Euphronia*.

Æsop. Know, Sir—that you are in the right on't.

Oron. But I pretend, Sir, that no Body else shall admire her.

Æsop. Then I pretend, Sir, she won't admire you.

Oron. Why so, Sir?

Æsop. Because, Sir---

Oron. What, Sir?

Æsop. She's a Woman, Sir.

Oron. What then, Sir?

Æsop. Why then, Sir, she desires to be admir'd by every Man she meets.

Oron. Sir, you are too familiar.

Æsop. Sir, you are too haughty; I must soften that harsh Tone of yours: It don't become you, Sir; it makes a Gentleman appear a Porter, Sir: And that you may know the use of good Language, I'll tell you what once happen'd. *Once on a Time* --

Oron. I'll have none of your old Wives Fables, Sir, I have no time to lose; therefore in a Word---

Æsop.

Æsp. In a Word, be mild: For nothing else will do you Service. Good Manners and soft Words have brought many a difficult thing to pass. Therefore hear me patiently.

*A Cook one Day, who had been drinking,
(Only as many times, you know,
You spruce, young, witty Beaux will do,
To avoid the dreadful pain of thinking)
Had Orders sent him to behead
A Goose, like any Chaplain sed.
He took such Pains to set his Knife right,
'Tbad done one good i' have lost one's Life by't.
But many Men have many Minds,
There's various Tastes in various Kind;
A Swan (who by mistake he seiz'd)
With wretched Life was better pleas'd:
For as he went to give the Blow,
In tuneful Notes she let him know,
She neither was a Goose, nor wish'd
To make her Exit so.*

*The Cook (who thought of nought but Blood,
Except it were the Grease,
For that you know's his Fees)
To hear her sing, in great Amazement stood.
Cods fish, quoth he, 'twas well you spoke,
For I was just upon the Stroke:
Your Feathers have so much of Goose,
A drunken Cook cou'd do no less
Than think you one; that you'll confess:
But y'have a Voice so soft, so sweet,
That rather than you shall be eat,
The House shall starve for want of Meat:
And so be turn'd her loose.*

To Oron.] Now, Sir, what say you? will you be the Swan, or the Goose?

Oron. The Choice can't, sure, be difficult to make;
I hope you will excuse my youthful Heat,
Young Men and Lovers have a claim to Pardon:
But since the Faults of Age have no such Plea,
I hope you'll be more cautious of offending.
The Flame that warms *Euphronia's* Heart and mine,

Has

Has long, alas! been kindled in our Breasts :
 Even Years were past since our two Souls were wed,
 'Twould be Adultery but to wish to part 'em.
 And would a Lump of Clay alone content you,
 A Mistress cold and senseless in your Arms,
 Without the least Remains or Signs of Life,
 Except her sighs, to mourn her absent Lover?
 Whilst you shou'd press her in your eager Arms,
 With fond Desire and Extasy of Love,
 Would it not pierce you to the very Soul,
 To see her Tears run trickling down her Cheeks,
 And know their Fountain meant 'em all to me?
 Could you bear this?

Yet thus the Gods revenge themselves on those
 Who stop the happy Course of mutual Love.
 If you must be unfortunate one way,
 Choose that where Justice may support your Grief,
 And shun the weighty Curse of injur'd Lovers.

Æsop. Why, this is pleading like a Swan indeed!
 Were any thing at Stake but my *Euphronia*—

Oron. Your *Euphronia*, Sir—

Æsop. The Goose—take heed——

Were any thing, I say, at Stake but her,
 Your Plea would be too strong to be refus'd.
 But our Debate's about a Lady, Sir.
 That's young, that's beautiful, that's made for Love.
 —So am not I, you'll say? But you're mistaken;
 I'm made to love, tho' not to be belov'd.
 I have a Heart like yours; I've folly too:
 I've every Instrument of Love like others.

Oron. But, Sir, you have not been so long a Lover;
 Your Passion's young and tender,
 'Tis easy for you to become its Master:
 Whilst I shou'd strive in vain; mine's old and fixt.

Æsop. The older 'tis, the easier to be govern'd? Were
 mine of as long a standing, 'twas possible I might get the
 better on't. Old Passions are like old Men; weak, and
 soon jostled into the Kennel.

Oron. Yet Age sometimes is strong, even to the Verge
 of Life.

Æsop. Ah, but there our Comparison don't hold.

Oron. You are too merry to be much in love.

Æsop.

Æsop. And you too sad to be so long.

Oron. My Grief may end my Days, so quench my Flame, but nothing else can e'er extinguish it.

Æsop. Don't be discourag'd, Sir, I have seen many a Man outlive his Passion twenty Years.

Oron. But I have sworn to die *Euphronia's* Slave.

Æsop. A decay'd Face always absolves a Lover's Oath.

Oron. Lovers whose Oaths are made to Faces then: But 'tis *Euphronia's* Soul that I adore, which never can decay.

Æsop. I wou'd fain see a young Fellow in love with a Soul of Threescore.

Oron. Quit but *Euphronia* to me, and you shall;
At least if Heaven's Bounty will afford us
But Years enow to prove my Constancy,
And this is all I ask the Gods and you.

Exit Oron.

Æsop solus.

A good Pretence however to beg long Life How grossly do the Inclinations of the Flesh impose upon the Simplicity of the Spirit! Had this young Fellow but study'd Anatomy, he'd have found the Source of his Passion lay far from his Mistress's Soul. Alas! alas! Had Women no more Charms in their Bodies, than what they have in their Minds, we should see more wise Men in the World, and much fewer Lovers and Poets.

[*Exit.*

A C T V.

Enter Euphronia, and Doris.

Euph. **H**Eavens, what is't you make me do, *Doris*? Apply myself to the Man I loath; beg Favours from him I hate; seek a Reprieve from him I abhor; 'tis low, 'tis mean, 'tis base in me.

Dor. Why, you hate the Devil as much as you do *Æsop*, or within a small matter, and should you think it a Scandal to pray him to let you alone a Day or two, if he were going to run away with you; ha?

Euph. I don't know what I think, nor what I say, nor what I do: But sure thou'rt not my Friend thus to advise me.

Dor.

Dor. I advise ! I advise nothing ; e'en follow your own way ; marry him, and make much of him. I have a mind to see some of his Breed ; if you like it, I like it : He shan't breed out of me only ; that's all I have to take care of.

Euph. Pr'ythee don't distract me.

Dor. Why, to-morrow's the Day, fix'd and firm, you know it ; much Meat, little Order, great many Relations, few Friends, Horse-play, Noise, and bawdy Stories, all's ready for a complete Wedding.

Euph. Oh ! what shall I do ?

Dor. Nay, I know this makes you tremble ; and yet your tender Conscience scruples to drop one hypocritical Curt'sy, and say, pray, Mr. *Æsop*, be so kind to defer it a few Days longer.

Euph. Thou know'st I cannot dissemble.

Dor. I know you can dissemble well enough when you shoud not do't. Do you remember how you us'd to plague your poor *Oronces* ; make him believe you loath'd him, when you cou'd have kiss'd the Ground he went on ; affront him in all publick Places ; ridicule him in all Company ; abuse him wherever you went : And when you had reduc'd him within an Ace of hanging or drowning, then come home with Tears in your Eyes, and cry, Now, *Doris*, let's go lock ourselves up, and talk of my dear *Oronces* : Is not this true ?

Euph. Yes, yes, yes. But, pr'ythee, have some Compassion of me. Come, I'll do any thing thou bid'st me — What shall I say to this Monster ? Tell me, and I'll obey thee.

Dor. Nay, then there's some hopes of you. Why you must tell him — 'Tis natural to you to dislike Folks at first sight : That since you have consider'd him better, you find your Aversion abated : That tho', perhaps it may be a hard matter for you ever to think him a Beau, you don't despair in time of finding out his *Je-ne-sçay quoy*. And that on t'other side ; tho' you have hitherto thought (as most young Women do) that nothing cou'd remove your first Affection, yet you have very great hopes in the natural Inconstancy of your Sex. Tell him, 'tis not impossible, a Change may happen, provided he gives you time : But that if he goes to force you, there's another

piece of Nature peculiar to Women, which may chance to spoil all, and that's Contradiction: Ring that Argument well in his Ears: He's a Philosopher, he knows it has weight in it. In short, wheedle, whine, flatter, lye, weep, spare nothing; it's a moist Age, Women have Tears enow; and when you have melted him down, and gain'd more time, we'll employ it in Closet-debates how to cheat him to the end of the Chapter.

Euph. Bnt you don't consider, *Doris*, that by this means I engage myself to him; and can't afterwards with Honour retreat.

Dor. Madam, I know the World—Honour's a Jest, when jilting's useful. Besides, he that wou'd have you break your Oath with *Oronces*, can never have the Impudence to blame you for cracking your Word with himself. But who knows what may happen between the Cup and the Lip? Let either of the old Gentlemen die, and we ride triumphant. Wou'd I cou'd but see the Statesman sick a little, I'd recommend a Doctor to him, a Cousin of mine, a Man of Conscience, a wise Physician; tip but the Wink, he understands you.

Euph. Thou wicked Wench, wou'dst poison him?

Dor. I don't know what I wou'd do; I think, I study, I invent; and somehow I will get rid of him. I do more for you, I'm sure, than you and your Knight-Errant do together for yourselves.

Euph. Alas, both he and I do all we can; thou know'st we do.

Dor. Nay, I know y'are willing enough to get together; but y'are a couple of helpless Things, Heaven knows.

Euph. Our Stars, thou see'st, are bent to Opposition.

Dor. Stars, —I'd fain see the Stars hinder me from running away with a Man I lik'd.

Euph. Ay, but thou know'st, shou'd I disoblige my Father, he'd give my Portion to my younger Sister.

Dor. Ay, there the Shoe pinches, there's the Love of the Age! Ah!—to what an Ebb of Passion are Lovers sunk in these Days! Give me a Woman that runs away with a Man, when his whole Estate's pack'd up in his Knap-sack: That tucks up her Coats to her Knees; and thro' thick and thro' thin, from Quarters to Camp, trudges

trudges heartily on, with a Child at her Back, another in her Arms, and a Brace in her Belly : There's Flame with a Witness, where this is the Effects on't. But we must have Love in a Feather-bed : Forsooth, a Coach and six Horses, clean Linen, and Cawdle ! Fie, for shame. O ho, here comes our Man. Now shew yourself a Woman, if you are one.

Enter Æsop.

Æsop. I'm told, fair Virgin, you desire to speak with me. Lovers are apt to flatter themselves ; I take your Message for a Favour. I hope 'twas meant so.

Euph. Favours from Women are so cheap of late, Men may expect 'em truly without Vanity.

Æsop. If the Women are so liberal, I think the Men are generous too on their Side : 'Tis a well-bred Age, thank Heaven ; and a deal of Civility there passes between the two Sexes. What Service is't that I can do you, Lady ?

Euph. Sir, I have a small Favour to intreat you.

Æsop. What is't ; I don't believe I shall refuse you.

Euph. What if you shou'd promise me you won't ?

Æsop. Why then I shou'd make a Divorse between my good-breeding and my Sense, which ought to be as sacred a Knot as that of Wedlock.

Euph. Dare you not trust then, Sir, the thing you love ?

Æsop. Not when the thing I love don't love me : Never.

Dor. Trust is sometimes the way to be belov'd.

Æsop. Ay, but 'tis oftner the way to be cheated.

Euph. Pray promise me you'll grant my Suit.

Dor. 'Tis a reasonable one, I give you my word for't.

Æsop. If it be so, I do promise to grant it.

Dor. That's still leaving yourself Judge.

Æsop. Why, who's more concern'd in the Trial ?

Dor. But no Body ought to be Judge in their own Cause.

Æsop. Yet he that is so, is sure to have no wrong done him.

Dor. But if he does wrong to others, that's worse.

Æsop. Worse for them, but not for him.

Dor. True Politician, by my troth !

Æsop. Men must be so when they have to do with Sharpers.

Euph. If I should tell you then there were a Possibility

I might be brought to love you, you'd scarce believe me.

Æfop. I shou'd hope as a Lover, and suspect as a Statesman.

Dor. [*aside.*] Love and Wisdom! There's the Passion of the Age again.

Eupb. You have liv'd long, Sir, and observ'd much: Did you never see Time produce strange Changes?

Æfop. Amongst Women, I must confess I have.

Eupb. Why, I'm a Woman, Sir.

Æfop. Why, truly, that gives me some hopes.

Eupb. I'll increase 'em, Sir; I have already been in love two Years.

Dor. And Time, you know, wears all things to tatters.

Æfop. Well observ'd.

Eupb. What if you shou'd allow me some to try what I can do?

Æfop. Why, truly, I wou'd have patience a Day or two, if there was as much Probability of my being your new Gallant, as perhaps there may be of changing your old one.

Dor. She shall give you fair Play for't, Sir; Opportunity and Leave to prattle, and that's what carries most Women in our Days. Nay, she shall do more for you. You shall play with her Fan; squeeze her little Finger; buckle her Shoe; read a Romance to her in the Arbour; and saunter in the Woods on a Moonshiny Night. If this don't melt her, she's no Woman, or you're no Man—

Æfop. I'm not a Man to melt a Woman that way: I know myself, and know what they require. 'Tis thro' a Woman's Eye you pierce her Heart. And I've no Darts can make their Entrance there.

Dor. You are a great Statesman, Sir; but I find you know little of our Matters. A Woman's Heart is to be enter'd forty ways. Every Sense she has about her keeps a Door to it. With a Smock face, and a Feather, you get in at her Eyes. With powerful Nonsense, in soft Words, you creep in at her Ears. An essenc'd Peruke, and a sweet Handkerchief, let's you in at her Nose. With a Treat, and a Box full of Sweet-meats, you slip in at her Mouth: And if you wou'd enter by her Sense of Feeling, 'tis as beaten a Road as the rest. What think you

you now, Sir? *There are more Ways to the Wood than ones you see.*

Æsop. Why, you're an admirable Pilot; I don't doubt but you have steer'd many a Ship safe to Harbour: But I'm an old stubborn Seaman; I must sail by my own Compass still.

Euph. And by your Obstinacy, lose your Vessel.

Æsop. No: I'm just entring into Port; we'll be married to-morrow.

Euph. For Heaven's sake defer it some Days longer; I cannot love you yet; indeed I cannot.

Æsop. Nor never will, I dare swear.

Euph. Why then will you marry me?

Æsop. Because I love you.

Euph. If you lov'd me, you wou'd never make me miserable.

Æsop. Not if I lov'd you for your sake; but I love you for my own.

Dor. aside.] 'There's an old Rogue for you.

Euph. weeping.] Is there no way left! must I be wretched?

Æsop. 'Tis but resolving to be pleas'd. You can't imagine the Strength of Resolution. I have seen a Woman resolve to be in the wrong all the Days of her Life; and by the help of her Resolution, she has kept her Word to a tittle.

Euph. Methinks the Subject we're upon shou'd be of weight enough to make you serious.

Æsop. Right: To-morrow Morning pray be ready: you'll find me so: I'm serious. Now I hope you are pleas'd.

[Turning away from her.]

Euph. [Going off weeping and leaving upon Doris.] Break Heart! For if thou hold'it, I'm miserable.

Dor. to Æsop.] Now may the Extravagance of a lewd Wife, with the Insolence of a virtuous one, join hand in hand, to bring thy grey Hairs to the Grave.

[Exeunt Euphronia and Doris.]

Æsop. My old Friend wishes me well to the last, I see.

Enter Learchus hastily, followed by Oronces.

Oron. Pray hear me, Sir.

Lear. 'Tis in vain, I'm resolv'd, I tell you. Most noble *Æsop*, since you are pleas'd to accept of my poor Off-

spring for your Consort, be so charitable to my old Age, to deliver me from the Impertinence of Youth, by making her your Wife this instant; for there's a Plot against my Life; they have resolv'd to teaze me to Death to-night, that they may break the Match to-morrow Morning. Marry her this instant, I intreat you.

Æsop. This instant, say you!

Lear. This instant; this very instant.

Æsop. 'Tis enough; get all things ready; I'll be with you in a Moment. *[Exit Æsop.]*

Lear. Now, what say you, Mr. *Flame-fire*? I shall have the whip-hand of you presently.

Oron. Defer it till to-morrow, Sir.

Lear. That you may run away with her to-night? Ha? —Sir, your most obedient humble Servant. Hey, who waits there? Call my Daughter to me: Quick. I'll give her her Dispatches presently.

Enter Euphronia.

Euph. D'ye call, Sir?

Lear. Yes, I do, Minx. Go shift yourself, and put on your best Clothes. You are to be marry'd:

Euph. Marry'd, Sir?

Lear. Yes, marry'd, Madam; and that this instant too.

Euph. Dear, Sir!

Lear. Not a Word: Obedience and a clean Smock; dispatch. *[Exit Euphronia weeping.]*

Learchus going off, turns to Oronces.] Sir, your most obedient humble Servant.

Oron. Yet hear what I've to say.

Lear. And what have you to say, Sir?

Oron. Alas! I know not what I have to say!

Lear. Very like so. That's a sure sign he's in love now.

Oron. Have you no Bowels?

Lear. Ha, ha! Bowels in a Parent! Here's a young Fellow for you. Hark thee, Stripling; being in a very merry Humour, I don't care if I discover some paternal Secrets to thee. Know then, that how humourous, how whimsical scever we may appear, there's one fixt Principle that runs thro' almost the whole Race of us; and that's to please ourselves. Why dost think I got my Daughter? Why, there was something in't that pleas'd me. Why dost think I marry my Daughter? Why

to please myself still. And what is't that pleases me? Why, my Interest; what do'st think it shou'd be? If *Æsop's* my Son-in-Law, he'll make me a Lord: If thou art my Son-in-Law——thou'it make me a Grandfather. Now I having more mind to be a Lord than a Grandfather, give my Daughter to him, and not to thee.

Oron. Then shall her Happiness weigh nothing with you?

Lear. Not this. If it did, I'd give her to thee, and not to him.

Oron. Do you think forc'd Marriage the Way to keep Women virtuous?

Lear. No; nor I don't care whether Women are virtuous or not.

Oron. You know your Daughter loves me.

Lear. I do so.

Oron. What, if the Children that *Æsop* may happen to father shou'd chance to be begot by me?

Lear. Why, then *Æsop* wou'd be the Cuckold, not I.

Oron. Is that your Care?

Lear. Yes: I speak as a Father.

Oron. What think you of your Child's Concern in t'other World?

Lear. Why, I think it my Child's Concern, not mine. I speak as a Father.

Oron. Do you remember you once gave me your Consent to wed your Daughter.

Lear. I did.

Oron. Why did you so?

Lear. Because you were the best Match that offer'd at that time. I did like a Father.

Oron. Why then, Sir, I'll do like a Lover. I'll make you keep your Word, or cut your Throat.

Lear. Who waits there, ha?

Enter Servants.

Lear. Seize me that Bully there. Carry him to Prison, and keep him safe. *[They seize him.]*

Oron. Why, you won't use me thus?

Lear. Yes, but I will tho': Away with him. Sir, your most humble Servant: I wish you a good Night's Rest;

Rest ; and as far as a merry Dream goes, my Daughter's at your Service.

Oron. Death and Furies ! *Exeunt Serv. with Oron.*

Lear. [singing] *Dol, de tol dol, dol, de tol dol, Lilly Burleigbre's lodg'd in a Bough.*

Enter a Troop of Musicians, Dancers, &c.

Lear. How now ! What have we got here ?

Mus. Sir, we are a troop of trifling Fellows, Fiddlers, and Dancers, come to celebrate the Wedding of your fair Daughter, if your Honour pleases to give us leave.

Lear. With all my Heart : But who do you take me for, Sir ! Ha ?

1 *Mus.* I take your Honour for our noble Governor of *Syficus*.

Lear. Governor of *Syficus* ; Governor of a Cheefecake ! I'm Father-in-law to the great *Æsop*, Sirrah. [*All bow to him.*] [*Aside.*]—I shall be a great Man. Come, tune your Fiddles ; shake your Legs : get all things ready. My Son-in-Law will be here presently.—I shall be a great Man. [*Exit.*]

1 *Mus.* A great Marriage, Brother : What do'st think will be the end-on't ?

2 *Mus.* Why, I believe we shall see three Turns upon't. This old Fellow here will turn Fool ; his Daughter will turn Strumpet ; and his Son-in-Law will turn 'em both out of Doors. But that's nothing to thee nor me, so long as we are paid for our Fiddling. So tune away, Gentlemen.

1 *Mus.* D'ye hear, Trumpets ! When the Bride appears, salute her with a melancholy Waft. 'Twill suit her Humour ; for I guess she mayn't be over-well pleas'd.

Enter Learchus with several Friends, and a Priest.

Lear. Gentlemen and Friends, y'are all welcome. I have sent to as many of you as our short time wou'd give me leave, to desire you wou'd be Witnesses of the Honour the great *Æsop* designs ourself and Family. Hey ; who attends there ? Go let my Daughter know I wait for her. [*Exit Servant.*] 'Tis a vast Honour that is done me, Gentlemen.

2 *Gent.* It is, indeed, my Lord.

Lear. [*aside.*] Look you there ; if they don't call me my Lord already—I shall be a great Man.

Enter

Enter Euphronia weeping and leaning upon Doris, both in deep Mourning.

Lear. How now ! What's here ! All in deep Mourning ! Here's a provoking Baggage for you.

[The Trumpets sound a melancholy Air till Æsop appears ; and then the Violin and Hautboys strike up a Lancashire Hornpipe.]

Enter Æsop in a gay foppish Dress, Long Peruke, &c. a gaudy Equipage of Pages and Footmen, all enter in an airy brisk manner.

Æsop. in an affected Tone to Euphronia.] Gad take my Soul, Mame, I hope I shall please you now—Gentlemen all, I'm your humble Servant. I'm going to be a very happy Man, you see. *[To Euph.]* When the heat of the Ceremony's over, if your Ladyship pleases, Mame, I'll wait upon you to take the Air in the Park. Hey, Page ; let there be a Coach and six Horses ready instantly. *[Observing her Dress.]*—I vow to Gad, Mame, I was so taken up with my good Fortune, I did not observe the extreme Fancy of your Ladyship's Wedding-Clothes—Infinitely pretty, as I hope to be fav'd ; a World of Variety, and not at all ordinary. *[To Lear.]*—My dear Father-in-Law, embrace me.

Lear. Your Son-in-Law does me too much Honour. *(aside.)*—I shall be a great Man.

Æsop. Come, Gentlemen, are all things ready ? Where's the Priest ?

Priest. Here, my noble Lord.

Æsop. Most Reverend.--Will you please to say Grace that I may fall to, for I'm very hungry, and here's very good Meat. But where's my Rival all this while ? the least we can do, is to invite him to the Wedding.

Lear. My Lord, he's in Prison.

Æsop. In Prison ! how so ?

Lear. He wou'd have murder'd me.

Æsop. A bloody Fellow ! But let's see him however. Send for him quickly. Ha, Governor---that handsome Daughter of yours, I will so mumble her---

Lear. I shall be a great Man.

Enter Oronces pinion'd and guarded.

Æsop. O ho, here's my Rival ! Then we have all we want. Advance, Sir, if you please. I desire you'll do
me

me the Favour to be a Witness to my Marriage, lest one of these Days you shou'd take a fancy to dispute my Wife with me.

Oron. Do you then send for me to insult me? 'Tis base in you.

Æsop. I have no time now to throw away upon Points of Generosity; I have hotter Work upon my hands. Come, Priest, advance.

Lear. Pray hold him fast there; he has the Devil and all of Mischief in's Eye.

Æsop. [*to Euph.*] Will your Ladyship please, Mame, to give me your fair Hand---Hey-dey

[*Sbe refuses her Hand.*

Lear. I'll give it you, my noble Lord, if she won't. [*aside.*] A stubborn, self-will'd, stiff-necked Strumpet.

[*Learchus holds out her Hand to Æsop, who takes it; Oronces stands on Æsop's left Hand, and the Priest before 'em.*

Æsop. Let my Rival stand next me: Of all Men I'd have him be satisfy'd.

Oron. Barbarous inhuman Monster!

Æsop. Now, Priest, do thy Office.

[*Flourish with the Trumpets.*

Priest. Since the eternal Laws of Fate decree,
That he, thy Husband; she thy Wife shou'd be,
May Heaven take you to its Care,
May *Jupiter* look kindly down,
Place on your Heads Contentment's Crown?
And may his Godhead never frown

Upon this happy Pair. [*Flourish again of Trumpets.*

[*As the Priest pronounces the last Line, Æsop joins Oronces and Euphronia's Hands.*

Oron. O happy Change! Blessings on Blessings wait on the generous *Æsop.*

Æsop. Happy, thrice happy, may you ever be,
And if you think there's something due to me,
Pay it in mutual Love and Constancy.

Euph. to Æsop.] You'll pardon me, most generous Man,
If in the present Transports of my Soul,
Which you yourself have by your Bounty caus'd,
My willing Tongue is ty'd from uttering
The Thoughts that flow from a most grateful Heart.

Æsop.

Æsop. For what I've done I merit little thanks,
 Since what I've done, my Duty bound me to.
 I wou'd your Father had acquitted his :
 But he who's such a Tyrant o'er his Children,
 To sacrifice their Peace to his Ambition,
 Is fit to govern nothing but himself.

To Lear.] And therefore, Sir, at my return to Court :
 I shall take care this City may be sway'd
 By more Humanity than dwells in you.

Lear. aside.] I shall be a great Man.

Euph to Æsop.] Had I not reason, from your constant
 Goodness,
 To judge your Bounty, Sir, is infinite,
 I shou'd not dare to sue for farther Favours :
 But pardon me, if imitating Heaven and you,
 I easily forgive my aged Father,
 And beg that *Æsop* would forgive him too.

[*Kneeling to him.*]

Æsop. The Injury he wou'd have done to you was
 great indeed : But 'twas a Blessing he design'd for me.
 If therefore you can pardon him, I may. [*To Lear.*]
 Your injur'd Daughter, Sir, has on her Knees intreated
 for her cruel barbarous Father ; and by her Goodness has
 obtain'd her Suit. If in the Remnant of your Days you
 can find out some way to recompense her, do it, that
 Men and Gods may pardon you, as she and I have done.
 But let me see, I have one Quarrel still to make up.
 Wher's my old Friend, *Doris*.

Dor. She's here, Sir, at your Service ; and as much
 your Friend as ever ; true to her Principles, and firm to
 her Mistress. But she has a much better Opinion of you
 now than she had half an Hour ago.

Æsop. She has reason : For my Soul appear'd then as
 deform'd as my Body. But I hope now one may so far
 mediate for t'other, that provided I don't make Love, the
 Women won't quarrel with me ; for they are worse
 Enemies even than they are Friends. Come, Gentle-
 men, I'll humour my Dress a little longer, and share with
 you in the Diversions these boon Companions have pre-
 par'd us. Let's take our Places, and see how they can
 divert us.

Æsop

Æsop leads the Bride to her Place. All being seated, there's a short Consort of Hautboys, Trumpets, &c. After which a Dance between an old Man and a young Woman, who shuns him still as he comes near her. At last he stops, and begins this Dialogue ; which they sing together.

Old Man.

*Why so cold, and why so coy ?
What I want in Youth and Fire,
I have in Love and in Desire :
To my Arms, my Love, my Joy ?
Why so cold, and why so coy ?*

Woman.

*'Tis Sympathy perhaps with you ;
You are cold, and I'm so too.*

Old Man.

*My Years alone have froze my Blood ;
Youthful Heat in Female Charms,
Glowing in my aged Arms,
Wou'd melt it down once more into a Flood.*

Woman.

*Women, alas, like Flints, ne'er burn alone ;
To make a Virgin know
There's Fire within the Stone,
Some manly Steel must bod'y strike the Blow.*

Old Man.

*Assist me only with your Charms,
You'll find I'm Man, and still am bold ;
You'll find I still can strike, tho' old :
I only want your Aid to raise my Arm.*

Enter a Youth, who seizes on the young Woman.

Youth.

*Who talks of Charms, who talks of Aid ?
I bring an Arm
That wants no Charm,
To rouse the Fire that's in a flinty Maid.
Retire Old Age,*

——*Winter be gone :*

Behold the youthful Spring comes gayly on.

Here,

*Here, here's a Torch to light a Virgin's Fire,
To my Arms, my Love my Joy;
When Women have what they desire,
They're neither cold nor coy.*

[She takes him in her Arms.

*The Song and Dance ended, Æsop takes Euphronia and
Oronces by the Hands, leading them forwards.*

Æsop. By this time, my young eager Couple, 'tis probable you wou'd be glad to be alone; perhaps you'll have a mind to go to Bed even without your Supper; for Brides and Bridegrooms eat little on their Wedding-Night. But since if Matrimony were worn as it ought to be, it wou'd perhaps sit easier about us than usually it does, I'll give you one word of Counsel, and so I shall release you. When one is out of Humour, let the other be dumb. Let your Diversions be such that both may have a share in 'em. Never let Familiarity exclude Respect. Be clean in your Clothes, but nicely so in your Persons. Eat at one Table, lie in one Room, but sleep in two Beds: I'll tell the Ladies why.

Turning to the Boxes.

*In the sprightly Month of May,
When Males and Females sport and play,
And kiss and toy away the Day;
An eager Sparrow and his Mate,
Chirping on a Tree were sat,
Full of Love——and full of Prate.
They talk'd of nothing but their Fires,
Of raging Heats, and strong Desires,
Of eternal Constancy;
How true and faithful they wou'd be,
Of this and that, and endless Joys,
And a thousand more such Toys:
The only thing they apprehended,
Was that their Lives wou'd be so short,
They cou'd not finish half their Sport
Before their Days were ended.
But as from Bough to Bough they rove,
They chanc'd at last
In furious haste,
On a Twig with Birdlime spread,
(Want of a more downy Bed)
To act a Scene of Love.*

Fatal it prov'd to both their Fires.
 For tho' at length they broke away,
 And bank'd the School-Boy of his Prey,
 Which made him weep the live-long Day,
 The Bridegroom in the hasty strife,
 Was stuck so fast to his dear Wife,
 That tho' he us'd his utmost Art,
 He quickly found it was in vain,
 To put himself to farther Pain,
 They never more must part.

A gloomy Shade o'ercast his Brow;
 He found himself — I know not how:
 He look'd as Husbands often do.
 Where e'er he mov'd, he felt her still,
 She kiss'd him oft against his Will:
 Abroad, at home, at Bed and Board,
 With Favours she o'erwhelm'd her Lord.
 Oft he turn'd his Head away,
 And seldom had a Word to say,
 Which absolutely spoil'd her Play,
 For she was better stor'd.

Howe'er at length her Stock was spent,
 (For Female Fires sometimes may be
 Subject to Mortality;)
 So Back to Back they sit, and sullenly repent.
 But the mute Scene was quickly ended,
 The Lady, for her share pretended
 The want of Love lay at his Door;
 For her part she had still in store
 Enough for him and twenty more,
 Which cou'd not be contended.

He answer'd her in homely Words,
 (For Sparrows are but ill-bred Birds)
 That he already had enjoy'd
 So much, that truly he was cloy'd.
 Which so provok'd her Spleen,
 That after some good hearty Prayers,
 A Jostle and some spiteful Tears,
 They fell together by the Ears,
 And ne'er were fond again.

P A R T II.

Enter Players.

Æsop. **W**ELL, good People, who are all you?
Omnes. Sir, we are Players.

Æsop. Players! What Players?

Play. Why, Sir, we are Stage-Players, that's our Calling: Tho' we play upon other things too; some of us play upon the Fiddle; some play upon the Flute; we play upon one another; we play upon the Town; and we play upon the Patentees.

Æsop. Patentees! Pr'ythee, what are they?

Play. Why, they are, Sir—Sir, they are—! Cod I don't know what they are—Fish or Flesh—Masters or Servants—Sometimes one—Sometimes t'other, I think—Just as we are in the Mood.

Æsop. Why, I thought they had a lawful Authority over you.

Play. Lawful Authority, Sir—Sir, we are free-born *Englishmen*, we care not for Law nor Authority neither, when we are out of Humour.

Æsop. But I think they pretended at least to an Authority over you; pray upon what Foundation was it built?

Play. Upon a rotten one—if you'll believe us. Sir, I'll tell you what the Projectors did: They embark'd twenty thousand Pound upon a leaky Vessel—She was built at *Whitehall*; I think they call'd her—the Patent—ay, the Patent: Her Keel was made of a Broad Seal—and the King gave 'em a white Staff for their Main-Mast. She was a pretty tight Frigate to look upon, indeed: They spar'd nothing to set her off; they gilded her, and painted her, and rigg'd, and gunn'd her: And so sent her a Privateering. But the first Storm that blew, down went the Mast, ashore went the ship—Crack says the Keel, Mercy cry'd the Pilot; but the Wind was so high, his Pray'rs cou'd not be heard—so they split upon a Rock—that lay hid under a Petticoat.

Æsop. A very sad Story, this; but what became of the Ship's Company?

Play. Why, Sir, your humble Servants here, who were the Officers, and the best of the Sailors—(little *Ben* amongst the rest) seiz'd on a small Bark that lay to our Hand, and away we put to Sea again. To say the truth, we were better mann'd than rigg'd, and Ammunition was plaguy scarce amongst us—However, a cruising we went, and some petty small Prizes we have made; but the Blessing of Heaven not being among us—Or how the Devil 'tis, I cannot tell; but we are not rich.

Æsop. Well, but what became of the rest of the Crew?

Play. Why, Sir, as for the Scoundrels, they, poor Dogs, stuck by the Wreck. The Captain gave them Bread and Cheese, and good Words---He told them, if they wou'd patch her up, and venture t'other Cruise, he'd prefer 'em all; so to work they went, and to Sea they got her.

Æsop. I hope he kept his word with 'em.

Play. That he did; he made the Boatswain's Mate Lieutenant: he made the Cook Doctor: He was forc'd to be Purser, and Pilot, and Gunner himself; and the Swabber took Orders to be Chaplain.

Æsop. But with such unskilful Officers, I'm afraid, they'll hardly keep above Water long.

Play. Why truly, Sir, we care not how soon they are under: But curst Folks thrive, I think. I know nothing else that makes 'em swim. I'm sure by the Rules of Navigation, they ought to have over-set long since; for they carry a great deal of Sail, and have very little Ballast.

Æsop. I'm afraid you ruin one another. I fancy if you were all in a Ship together again, you'd have less Work, and more Profit.

Play. Ah, Sir---we are resolved we'll never sail under Captain Patentee again.

Æsop. Pr'ythee, why so?

Play. Sir, he has us'd us like Dogs.

Wom. ——— And Bitches too, Sir.

Æsop. I'm sorry to hear that; pray how was't he treat-ed you?

Play. Sir 'tis impossible to tell; he us'd us like the *Eng-lish* at *Amboyna*——

Æsop. But I wou'd know some Particulars: Tell me what 'twas he did to you?

Play.

Play. What he did, Sir----why, he did in the first place, Sir---In the first place, Sir, he did---I'cod I don't know what he did---Can you tell, Wife?

Wom. Yes, marry can I; and a burning Shame it was too.

Play. O, I remember now, Sir, he wou'd not give us Plumbs enough in our Pudding.

Æsop. That indeed was very hard; but did he give you as many as he promis'd you?

Play. Yes, and more; but what of all that, we had not as many as we had a mind to-----

1 *Wom.* Sir, my Husband tells you Truth-----

Æsop. I believe he may; but what other Wrongs did he do you?

1 *Wom.* Why, Sir, he did not treat me with Respect; 'twas not one Day in three he would so much as bid me good-morrow-----

2 *Wom.* Sir, he invited me to Dinner, and never drank my Health.

1 *Wom.* Then he cock'd his Hat at Mrs. *Pert.*

2 *Wom.* Yes, and told Mrs. *Slippery* he had as good a Face as she had.

Æsop. Why, these were insufferable Abuses---

2 *Play.* Then, Sir, I did but come to him one Day---and tell him I wanted fifty Pound, and what do you think he did by me, Sir---Sir, he turn'd round upon his Heel like a Top---

1 *Play.* But that was nothing to the Affront he put upon me, Sir. I came to him, and in very civil words, as I thought, desir'd him to double my Pay: Sir, wou'd you believe it? He had the Barbarity to ask me if I intended to double my Work; and because I told him no, Sir---he did use me, good Lord, how he did use me.

Æsop. Pr'ythee how?

1 *Play.* Why he walk'd off, and answer'd me never a Word.

Æsop. How had you Patience?

1 *Play.* Sir, I had not Patience. I sent him a Challenge; and what do you think his Answer was---he sent me word I was a scoundrel Son of a Whore, and he wou'd only fight me by Proxy---

Æsop. Very fine!

1 *Play.* At this rate, Sir, were we poor Dogs us'd--- till one frosty Morning down he comes amongst us---and very roundly tells us---That for the future, no Purchase, no Pay. They that wou'd not work shou'd not eat---Sir, we at first ask'd him cooly and civilly---why ? His answer was. because the Town wanted Diverfion, and he wanted Money---Our Reply to this, Sir, was very short ; but I think to the purpose.

Æfop. What was it ?

1 *Play.* It was, Sir, that so we wallow'd in Plenty and Ease---the Town and he might be damn'd---This, Sir, is the true History of our Separation---and we hope you'll stand our Friend---

Æfop. I'll tell you what, Sirs ---

*I once a Pack of Beagles knew---
That much resembled I know who ;
With a good Huntsman at their Tail,
In full Command,
With Whip in Hand,
They'd run apace
The Cheerful Chace,
And of their Game were seldom known to fail.
But being at length their chance to find
A Huntsman of a gentler Kind,
They soon perceiv'd the Rein was slack
The Word went quickly thro' the Pack---
They one and all cry'd Liberty ;
This happy Moment we are free,
We'll range the Woods,
Like Nymphs and Gods,
And spend our Mouths in praise of Mutiny.
With that old Jowler trots away,
And Bowman singles out his Prey ;
Thunder bellow'd thro' the Wood,
And swore he'd burst his Guts with Blood.
Venus tript it o'er the Plain,
With boundless Hopes of boundless Gain.
---- Juno, she slipt down the Hedge,
But left her sacred Word for Pledge ;
That all she pickt up by the by---
Shou'd to the publick Treasury.*

And

*And well they might rely upon her ;
 For Juno was a Bitch of Honour.
 In short they all had hopes to see
 A heavenly Crop of Mutiny.
 And so to reaping fell :
 But in a little time they found,
 It was the Devil had till'd the Ground,
 And brought the Seed from Hell.
 The Pack divided, nothing throve :
 Discord seiz'd the Throne of Love.
 Want and Misery all endure ;
 All take pains, and all grow poor.
 When they had toil'd the live-long day,
 And came at Night to view their Prey,
 Oft alas so ill they'd sped,
 That half went supperless to Bed.
 At length they all in Council sate,
 Where at a very fair Debate,
 It was agreed at last,
 That Slavery with Ease and Plenty,
 When Hounds were something turn'd of twenty,
 Was much a better Fate,
 Than 'twas to work and fast.*

1 *Play.* Well, Sir---and what did they do then ?

Æsop. Why they all went home to their Kennel again.
 If you think they did wisely, you'll do well to follow
 their Example. [Exit *Æsop.*

1 *Play.* Well, Beagles, what think you of the little
 Gentleman's Advice ?

2 *Wom.* I think he's a little ugly Philosopher, and talks
 like a Fool.

1 *Play.* Ay, why there's it now ! If he had been a
 tall handsome Blockhead, he had talk'd like a wise Man.

2 *Wom.* Why, do you think, Mr. *Jowler*, that we'll
 ever join again ?

1 *Play.* I do think, sweet Mrs. *Juno*, that if we do
 not join again, you must be a little free'r of your Car-
 case than you are, or you must bring down your Pride
 to a Serge Petticoat.

1 *Wom.* And do you think, Sir, after the Affronts I
 have receiv'd, the Patent and I can ever be Friends ?

1 *Play.*

1 *Play*. I do think, Madam, that if my Interest had not been more affronted than your Face, the Patent and you had never been Foes.

1 *Wom*. And so, Sir, then you have serious Thoughts of a Reconciliation?

1 *Play*. Madam, I do believe I may.

1 *Wom*. Why then, Sir, give me leave to tell you, that—make it my Interest, and I'll have serious Thoughts on't too.

2 *Wom*. Nay, if you are thereabouts, I desire to come into the Treaty.

3 *Play*. And I.

4 *Play*. And I.

2 *Play*. And I. No separate Peace. None of your *Turin Play*, I beseech you.

1 *Play*. Why then, since you are all so Christianly disposed—I think we had best adjourn immediately to our Council-Chamber; choose some potent Prince for Mediator and Guarantee—Fix upon the Place of Treaty, dispatch our Plenipo's, and whip up the Peace like an Oyster. For under the Rose, my Confederates, here is such a damn'd Discount upon our Bills, I'm afraid, if we stand it out another Campaign, we must live upon slender Subsistence.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Æsop; and a Country Gentleman, who walks to and fro, looking angrily upon Æsop.

Æsop. Have you any Business with me, Sir.

Gent. — I can't tell whether I have or not.

Æsop. You seem disturb'd, Sir.

Gent. I'm always so at the sight of a Courtier.

Æsop. Pray what may it be, that gives you so great an Antipathy to 'em?

Gent. My Profession.

Æsop. What's that?

Gent. Honesty.

Æsop. 'Tis an honest Profession. I hope, Sir, for the general Good of Mankind, you are in some publick Employment?

Gent. So I am, Sir,—no Thanks to the Court.

Æsop. You are then, I suppose, employ'd by—

Gent. My Country.

Æsop. Who have made you——

Gent.

Gent. A Senator.

Æsop. Sir, I reverence you.

[*Bowing.*

Gent. Sir, you may reverence as low as you please ; but I shall spare none of you. Sir, I am entrusted by my Country with above ten thousand of their Grievances, and in order to redress them, my Design is to hang ten thousand Courtiers.

Æsop. Why, 'tis making short work, I must confess ; but are you sure. Sir, that wou'd do't ?

Gent. Sure,—Ay, sure.

Æsop. How do you know ?

Gent. Why, the whole Country says so, and I at the Head of 'em. Now let me see who dares say the contrary.

Æsop. Not I, truly. But, Sir, if you won't take it ill, I'll ask you a Question or two.

Gent. Sir, I shall take ill what I please. And if you, or e'er a Courtier of you all pretend the contrary, I say, its a Breach of Privilege—Now put your Question, if you think fit

Æsop. Why then, Sir, with all due regard to your Character, and your Privilege too, I wou'd be glad to know what you chiefly complain of ?

Gent. Why, Sir, I do chiefly complain, that we have
A great many Ships, and very little Trade ;
A great many Tenants, and very little Money ;
A great many Soldiers, and very little fighting ;
A great many *Gazettes*, and little good News ;
A great many Statesmen, and very little Wisdom :
A great many Parsons, and not an Ounce of Religion.

Æsop. Why truly, Sir, I do confess these are Grievances very well worth your redressing. And I perceive you are truly sensible of our Diseases, but I'm afraid you are a little out in the Cure.

Gent. Sir, I perceive you take me for a Country-Physician : but you shall find, Sir, that a Country-Doctor is able to deal with a Court-Quack ; and to shew you that I do understand something of the State of the Body-Political, I will tell you, Sir, that I have heard a wise Man say, the Court is the Stomach of the Nation, in which, if the Business be not thoroughly digested, the whole Carcase will be in disorder. Now, Sir, I do find by the Feebleness of the Members, and the Vapours that fly into the Head, that the same Stomach is full of Indigestions, which must
be

be remov'd : And therefore, Sir, I am comè Post to Town with my Head full of *Crocus Metallorum*, and design to give the Court a Vomit.

Æsop. Sir, the Physick you mention, tho' necessary sometimes, is of too violent a Nature to be us'd without a great deal of Caution. I'm afraid you are a little too rash in your Prescriptions. Is it not possible you may be mistaken in the Cause of the Distemper ?

Gent. Sir, I do not think it possible I shou'd be mistaken in any thing.

Æsop. Have you been long a Senator ?

Gent. No, Sir.

Æsop. Have you been much about Town ?

Gent. No, Sir.

Æsop. Have you convers'd much with Men of Business ?

Gent. No, Sir.

Æsop. Have you made any serious Enquiry into the present Disorders of the Nation ?

Gent. No, Sir.

Æsop. Have you ever heard what the Men now employ'd in Business have to say for themselves ?

Gent. No, Sir.

Æsop. How then do you know they deserve to be punish'd for the present Disorders in your Affairs ?

Gent. I'll tell you how I know.

Æsop. I would be glad to hear.

Gent. Why, I know by this—I know it, I say, by this—that I'm sure on't—And to give you Demonstration that I'm sure on't, there is not one Man in a good Post in the Nation—but I'd give my Vote to hang him : Now I hope you are convinc'd.

Æsop. As for Example : the first Minister of State, why wou'd you hang him ?

Gent. Because he gives bad Counsel.

Æsop. How do you know ?

Gent. Why they say so.

Æsop. And who would you put in his room ?

Gent. One that would give better.

Æsop. Who's that ?

Gent. Myself.

Æsop. The Secretary of State, why wou'd you hang him ?

Gent.

Gent. Because he has not good Intelligence.

Æsop. How do you know ?

Gent. I have heard so.

Æsop. And who would you put in his Place ?

Gent. My Father.

Æsop. The Treasurer, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he does not understand his Business.

Æsop. How do know ?

Gent. I dreamt so.

Æsop. And who would you have succeed him ?

Gent. My Uncle.

Æsop. The Admiral, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he has not destroy'd the Enemies Ships.

Æsop. How do you know he could do it ?

Gent. Why, I believe so.

Æsop. And who would you have command in his stead ?

Gent. My Brother.

Æsop. And the General, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he took ne'er a Town last Campaign.

Æsop. And how do you know it was in his power ?

Gent. Why I don't care a Soufe whether 'twas in his power or not. But I have a Son at home, a brave chopping Lad ; he has been Captain in the Militia these twelve Months, and I'd be glad to see him in his Place. What do ye stare for, Sir ? ha ! I'gad I tell you he'd scour all to the Devil. He's none of your Fencers, none of your sa-sa Men. *Numps* is downright, that's his Play. You may see his Courage in his Face : He has a pair of Cheeks like two Bladders, a Nose as flat as your Hand, and a Forehead like a Bull.

Æsop. In short, Sir, I find if you and your Family were provided for, things would soon grow better than they do.

Gent. And so they wou'd, Sir. Clap me at the head of the State, and *Numps* at the head of the Army : He with his Club-Musquet, and I with my Club-Head-piece, we'd soon put an end to your Business.

Æsop. I believe you wou'd indeed. And therefore since I happen to be acquainted with your extraordinary Abilities, I am resolv'd to give the King an Account of you, and employ my Interest with him, that you and your Son may have the Post you desire.

Gent. Will you, by the Lord ?-----Give me your Fift,
Sir

Sir---the only honest Courtier that ever I met with in my Life.

Æsop. But, Sir, when I have done you this mighty piece of Service, I shall have a small Request to beg of you, which I hope you won't refuse me.

Gent. What's that?

Æsop. Why 'tis in behalf of the two Officers who are to be displac'd to make room for you and your Son.

Gent. The Secretary and the General?

Æsop. The same. 'Tis pity they should be quite out of Business: I must therefore desire you'll let me recommend one of 'em to you for your Bailiff, and t'other for your Huntsman.

Gent. My Bailiff and my Huntsman!-----Sir, that's not to be granted.

Æsop. Pray why!

Gent. Why?-----Because one wou'd ruin my Land, and t'other spoil my Fox-Hounds.

Æsop. Why do you think so?

Gent. Why do I think so!----These Courtiers will ask the strangest Questions-----Why, Sir, do you think that Men bred up to the state or the Army, can understand the Business of Ploughing and Hunting?

Æsop. I did not know but they might.

Gent. How cou'd you think so?

Æsop. Because I see Men bred up to Ploughing and Hunting, understand the Business of the State and the Army.

Gent. I'm shot---I ha'n't one Word to say for myself---I never was so caught in my Life.

Æsop. I perceive, Sir, by your Looks, what I have said has made some Impression upon you; and would perhaps do more if you wou'd give it leave. [*Taking his Hand.*] Come, Sir, tho' I am a Stranger to you, I can be your Friend; my Favour at Court does not hinder me from being a Lover of my Country. 'Tis my Nature, as well as Principle, to be pleas'd with the Prosperity of Mankind. I wish all things happy, and my Study is to make them so.

The Distempers of the Government (which I own are great) have employ'd the stretch of my understanding, and the deepest of my Thoughts, to penetrate the Cause,
and

and to find out the Remedy. But alas ! all the Product of my Study is this ; That I find there is too near a Resemblance between the Diseases of the State and those of the Body, for the most expert Minister to become a greater Master in one than the College is in t'other : And how far their Skill extends, you may see by this Lump upon my Back. Allowances in all Professions there must be, since 'tis weak Man that is the weak Professor. Believe me, Senator, for I have seen the Proof on't ; The longest Beard amongst us is a Fool. Cou'd you but stand behind the Curtain, and there observe the secret Springs of State, you'd see in all the Good or Evil that attends it, ten Ounces of Chance for one Grain either of Wisdom or Roguery.

You'd see, perhaps a venerable Statesman sit fast asleep in a great downy Chair ; whilst in that soft Vacation of his Thought, blind Chance (or what at least we blindly call so) shall so dispose a thousand secret Wheels, that when he awakes, he needs but write his Name, to publish to the World some blest Event, for which his Statue shall be rais'd in Brass.

Perhaps a Moment thence, you shall behold him torturing his Brain ; his Thoughts all stretcht upon the Rack for publick Service. The live-long Night, when all the World's at rest, Consum'd in Care, and watching for their Safety, when by a Whirlwind in his Fate, in spite of him, some mischief shall befall 'em, for which a furious Sentence strait shall pass, and they shall vote him to the Scaffold. Even thus uncertain are Rewards and Punishments ; and even thus little do the People know, when 'tis the Statesman merits one or t'other.

Gent. Now I do believe I am beginning to be a wise Man ; for I never till now perceived I was a Fool. But do you then really believe, Sir, our Men in Business do the best they can.

Æsop. Many of 'em do : Some perhaps do not. But this you may depend upon ; he that is out of Business is the worst Judge in the World of him that is in : First, Because he seldom knows any thing of the Matter : And Secondly, because he always desires to get his Place.

Gent. And so, Sir, you turn the Table upon the Plaintiff, and lay the Fool and Knave at his Door.

Æsop. If I do him wrong, I'm sorry for't. Let him examine himself, he'll find whether I do or not.

[*Exit* *Æsop.*

Gent. ———Examine! ———I think I have had enough of that already. There's nothing left, that I know of, but to give Sentence: And truly I think there's no great difficulty in that. A very pretty fellow I am indeed! Here am I come bellowing and roaring two hundred Miles Post to find myself an Ass; when with one quarter of an Hour's Consideration I might have made the self-same Discovery, without going over my Treshold. Well! if ever they send me on their Errand to reform the State again, I'll be damn'd. But this I'll do: I'll go home and reform my Family, if I can: Them I'm sure I know. There's my Father's a peevish old Coxcomb: There's my Uncle's a drunken old Sot: There's my Brother's a cowardly Bully: Son *Nymphs* is a lubberly Whelp: I've a great ramping Daughter, that stares like a Heifer; and a Wife that's a flatternly Sow. [*Exit.*

Enter a young, gay, airy Beau, who stands smiling contemptuously upon *Æsop.*

Æsop. Well, Sir, what are you?

Beau. A Fool.

Æsop. That's impossible; — for if thou wer't, thou'd'st think thyself a wise Man.

Beau. So I do — This is my own Opinion — t'other's my Neighbour's. [*Walking airily about.*

Æsop. gazing after him.] Have you any Business with me, Sir?

Beau. Sir, I have Business with nobody, Pleasure's my Study.

Æsop. aside.] An odd Fellow this? — Pray, Sir, who are you?

Beau. I can't tell ———

Æsop. ———Do you know who I am?

Beau. No, Sir: I'm a Favourite at Court, and I neither know myself, nor any Body else.

Æsop. Are you in any Employment?

Beau. Yes ———

Æsop. What is't?

Beau. I don't know the Name on't.

Æsop. You know the Business on't, I hope?

Beau

Beau. That I do—the Business of it is—to—put in a Deputy and receive the Money?

Æsop. ——Pray what may be your Name?

Beau. Empty.

Æsop. Where do you live?

Beau. In the Side-Box.

Æsop. What do you do there?

Beau. I ogle the Ladies.

Æsop. To what Purpose?

Beau. To no Purpose.

Æsop. Why then do you do it?

Beau. Because they like it, and I like it.

Æsop. Wherein consists the Pleasure?

Beau. In playing the Fool.

Æsop. ——Pray, Sir, what Age are you?

Beau. Five and twenty my Body; my Head's about fifteen.

Æsop. Is your Father living?

Beau. Dead, thank God.

Æsop. Has he been long so?

Beau. Positively yes.

Æsop. Where were you brought up?

Beau. At School.

Æsop. What School?

Beau. The School of *Venus*.

Æsop. Were you ever at the University?

Beau. Yes.

Æsop. What Study did you follow there?

Beau. My Bedmaker.

Æsop. How long did you stay?

Beau. Till I had lost my Maidenhead.

Æsop. Why did you come away?

Beau. Because I was expell'd.

Æsop. Where did you go then?

Beau. To Court.

Æsop. Who took care of your Education there?

Beau. A Whore and a Dancing-Master.

Æsop. What did you gain by them?

Beau. A Minuet, and the Pox.

Æsop. Have you an Estate?

Beau. I had.

Æsop. What's become on't?

Beau. Spent.

Æsop. In what?

Beau. In a Twelvemonth.

Æsop. But how?

Beau. Why, in Dressing, Drinking, Whoring, Claps, Dice, and Scriveners. What do you think of me now, old Gentleman?

Æsop. Pray what do you think of yourself?

Beau. I don't think at all: I know how to bestow my time better.

Æsop. Are you married?

Beau. No---have you ever a Daughter to bestow upon me?

Æsop. She wou'd be well bestow'd.

Beau. Why, I'm a strong young Dog, you old Put you: She may be worse coupled---

Æsop. Have you then a mind to a Wife, Sir?

Beau. Yaw, myn Heer.

Æsop. What wou'd you do with her?

Beau. Why, I'd take care of her Affairs, rid her of all her Troubles, her Maidenhead, and her Portion.

Æsop. And pray what sort of Wife wou'd you be willing to throw yourself away upon?

Beau. Why, upon one that has Youth, Beauty, Quality, Virtue, Wit and Money.

Æsop. And how may you be qualified yourself, to back you in your Pretensions to such a one?

Beau. Why, I am qualified with---a Perriwig---a Snuff-box---a Feather---a---smooth Face---a Fool's Head---and a Patch.

Æsop. But one Question more: What Settlements can you make?

Beau. Settlements!---Why, if she be a very great Heiress indeed, I believe I may settle---myself upon her for Life, and my Pox upon her Children for ever.

Æsop. 'Tis enough; you may expect I'll serve you, if it lies in my way. But I wou'd not have you rely too much upon your Success, because People sometimes are mistaken---

As for Example---

An Ape

*An Ape there was of nimble Parts,
 A great Intruder into Hearts,
 As brisk, and gay, and full of Air,
 As you, or I, or any here ;
 Rich in his Dress, of splendid Shew,
 And with an Head like any Beau :
 Eternal Mirth was in his Face ;
 Where'er he went,
 He was content,
 So Fortune had but kindly sent
 Some Ladies—and a Looking-glass.
 Encouragement they always gave him,
 Encouragement to play the Fool ;
 For soon they found it was a Tool,
 Wou'd hardly be so much in Love,
 But that the mumbling of a Glove,
 Or tearing of a Fan, wou'd save him.*

*These Bounties he accepts as Proof
 Of Feats done by his Wit and Youth ;
 He gives their Freedom gone for ever,
 Concludes each Female Heart undone,
 Except that very Happy One,
 To which he'd please to do the Favour.
 In short, so smooth his matters went,
 He guess'd, where'er his Thoughts were bent,
 The Lady he must carry.*

*So put on a fine new Cravat,
 He comb'd his Wig, he cock'd his Hat,
 And gave it out, he'd marry.
 But here, alas ! he found to's Cost,
 He had reckon'd long without his Host :
 For wherefoe'er he made th' Attack,
 Poor Pug with Shame was beaten back.*

*The first fair She, he had in Chace,
 Was a young Cat, extremely rich,
 Her Mother was a noted Witch ;
 So, had the Daughter prov'd but Civil,
 He had been related to the Devil.*

*But when he came
 To urge his Flame,
 She scratch'd him o'er the Face.*

*With that he went among the Bitches,
Such as bad Beauty, Wit und Riches,
And swore Miss Maulkin, to her Cost,
Shou'd quickly see what she had lost :
But the poor unlucky Swain
Mist'd his Shepperdes again ;
His Fate was to miscarry.
It was his Destiny to find,
That Cats and Dogs are of a mind,
When Monkeys come to marry.*

Beau. 'Tis very well ;---'Tis very well, old Spark, I say 'tis very well. Because I han't a pair of plod Shoes, and a dirty Shirt, you think a Woman won't venture upon me for a Husband--- Why now to shew you, old Father, how little you Philosophers know of the Ladies, I'll tell you an Adventure of a Friend of mine.

*A Band, a Bob-Wig, and a Feather,
Attack'd a Lady's Heart together,
The Band in a most Learned Plea,
Made up of deep Philosophy,
Told her, if she wou'd please to wed
A Reverend Beard, and take instead
Of vigorous Youth,
Old solemn Truth,
With Books and Morals into Bed,
How happy she wou'd be.*

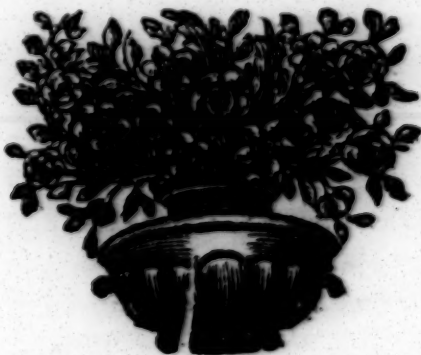
*The Bob he talk'd of Management,
What wondrous Blessings Heaven sent
On Care, and Pains, and Industry ;
And truly he must be so free,
To own he thought your airy Beaux,
With powder'd Wigs and dancing Shoes,
Were good for nothing (mend his Soul)
But prate, and talk, and play the Fool.*

*He said 'twas Wealth gave Joy and Mirth
And that to be the dearest Wife,
Of one who labour'd all his Life,
To make a Mine of Gold his own,
And not spend Six-pence when he'd done,
Was Heaven upon Earth.*

When

*When these two Blades had done, d'ye see,
 The Feather (as it might be me)
 Steps out, Sir, from behind the Skreen,
 With such an Air, and such a Mien,
 Look you, old Gentleman, in short,
 He quickiy spoil'd the Statesman's Sport.
 It prov'd such Sun-shine Weather,
 That you must know, at the first Beck.
 The Lady leapt about his Neck,
 And off they went together.*

*To Æsop.] There's a Tale for your Tale, old Dad,
 and so——* *Serviteur.* *[Exeunt.]*





PROLOGUE.

G Allants, we never yet produc'd a Play
With greater Fears than this we act to-day ;
Barren of all the Graces of the Stage,
Barren of all that entertains this Age.
No Hero, no Romance, no Plot, no Show,
No Rape, no Barwdy, no Intrigue, no Beau :
There's nothing in't with which we use to please ye ;
With downright dull Instruction w' are to tease ye :
The Stage turns Pulpit, and the World's so fickle,
The Play-House in a Whim turns Conventicle.
But Preaching here must prove a hungry Trade,
The Patentees will find so, I'm afraid :
For tho' with heavenly Zeal you all abound,
As by your Lives and Morals may be found ;
Tho' every Female here o'erflows with Grace,
And chaste Diana's written in her Face ;
The Maids renounce the Sweets of Fornication,
And one lewd Wife's not left in all the Nation ;
Tho' Men grow true, and the foul Fiend desy ;
Tho' Tradesmen cheat no more, nor Lawyers lye ;
Tho' not one Spot be found on Levi's Tribe,
Nor one soft Courtier that will touch a Bribe ;
Yet in the midst of such religious Days,
Sermons have never borne the Price of Plays.

F I N I S.

